



8N

Government
Publications

N° 3

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Second Session, 41st Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 41^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 14 September 2016

Mercredi 14 septembre 2016



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 14 September 2016 / Mercredi 14 septembre 2016

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Throne speech debate / Débat sur le discours du trône

Hon. David Zimmer	55
Mr. Rick Nicholls	55
Ms. Catherine Fife	55
Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris	56
Mr. Victor Fedeli	56
Hon. David Zimmer	56
Ms. Andrea Horwath	57
Mr. Taras Natyshak	60
Debate deemed adjourned	64

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Michael Harris	64
Hon. Helena Jaczek	64
Mr. Jack MacLaren	64
Hon. Michael Chan	64
Ms. Sylvia Jones	64
Ms. Peggy Sattler	64
Mr. Lou Rinaldi	64
Mr. Patrick Brown	64
Mr. Paul Miller	64
Hon. Eric Hoskins	65
Hon. Eleanor McMahon	65

Legislative interns

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	65
-------------------------------------	----

Wearing of pins

Hon. Eleanor McMahon	65
----------------------------	----

Legislative pages

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	65
-------------------------------------	----

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Energy policies

Mr. Patrick Brown	65
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	65
Hon. Glenn Thibeault	66

Hydro rates

Mr. Patrick Brown	67
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	67

Energy policies

Ms. Andrea Horwath	68
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	68

Government policies

Ms. Andrea Horwath	68
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	69

Government's record

Mr. Todd Smith	69
Hon. Glenn Thibeault	69

Minimum wage

Mr. Taras Natyshak	70
Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn	70

Access to information

Mr. Han Dong	71
Hon. Liz Sandals	71

Fundraising

Mr. Randy Hillier	71
Hon. Yasir Naqvi	71

Education funding

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky	72
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	72

Immigration and refugee policy

Ms. Daiene Vernile	73
Hon. Laura Albanese	73

Highway construction

Mr. Michael Harris	73
Hon. Steven Del Duca	74

Disaster relief / Secours aux sinistrés

Mme France Gélinas	74
L'hon. Glen R. Murray	74

Electric vehicles

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn	75
Hon. Steven Del Duca	75
Hon. Glen R. Murray	75

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario

Mr. Bill Walker	76
-----------------------	----

Sarah Lewis

Mr. Percy Hatfield	76
--------------------------	----

Community barbecue

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti	76
--------------------------------	----

Heritage railway and carousel

Mr. Victor Fedeli	77
-------------------------	----

Autism treatment

Miss Monique Taylor	77
---------------------------	----

Public transit

Ms. Daiene Vernile	77
--------------------------	----

Calvin Stein	
Mr. Todd Smith.....	77
Community barbecue	
Mrs. Cristina Martins	78
Erica Wiebe	
Mr. Jack MacLaren	78

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES / RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly	
Mr. Steve Clark	78
Report deemed adopted.....	78

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

Ministry of Community and Social Services Amendment Act (Social Assistance Research Commission), 2016, Bill 6, Mr. Paul Miller / Loi de 2016 modifiant la Loi sur le ministère des Services sociaux et communautaires (Commission de recherche sur l'aide sociale), projet de loi 6, M. Paul Miller	
First reading agreed to.....	79
Mr. Paul Miller.....	79
Promoting Affordable Housing Act, 2016, Bill 7, Mr. Ballard / Loi de 2016 sur la promotion du logement abordable, projet de loi 7, M. Ballard	
First reading agreed to.....	79
Hon. Chris Ballard	79
Housing Services Corporation Accountability Act, 2016, Bill 8, Mr. Hardeman / Loi de 2016 sur la responsabilisation de la Société des services de logement, projet de loi 8, M. Hardeman	
First reading agreed to.....	79
Mr. Ernie Hardeman	79
End Age Discrimination Against Stroke Recovery Patients Act, 2016, Bill 9, Mr. Coe / Loi de 2016 visant à mettre fin à la discrimination fondée sur l'âge envers les malades se rétablissant d'un accident vasculaire cérébral, projet de loi 9, M. Coe	
First reading agreed to.....	80
Mr. Lorne Coe.....	80
Stoneridge Development Corporation Act, 2016, Bill Pr49, Mr. Dong	
First reading agreed to.....	80
Opportunity in the Sharing Economy Act, 2016, Bill 10, Mr. Hudak / Loi de 2016 sur les possibilités offertes par l'économie de partage, projet de loi 10, M. Hudak	
First reading agreed to.....	80
Mr. Tim Hudak	80

Free My Rye Act (Liquor Statute Law Amendment), 2016, Bill 11, Mr. Hudak / Loi de 2016 sur la vente libre de whisky (modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne les boissons alcooliques), projet de loi 11, M. Hudak	
First reading agreed to.....	80
Mr. Tim Hudak.....	80

Protection for Motor Vehicle Accident Victims and Other Consumers from Unfair Legal Practices Act, 2016, Bill 12, Mr. Hudak / Loi de 2016 sur la protection des victimes d'accidents de véhicules automobiles et d'autres consommateurs contre les pratiques juridiques injustes, projet de loi 12, M. Hudak	
First reading agreed to.....	81
Mr. Tim Hudak.....	81

Liberty Tire Recycling Canada I Ltd. Act, 2016, Bill Pr48, Mr. Hardeman	
First reading agreed to.....	81

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Government services	
Ms. Laurie Scott	81
Environmental protection	
Mr. Percy Hatfield.....	81
Agri-food industry	
Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	82
Privatization of public assets	
Mme France Gélinas	82
Natural gas	
Mr. Jim McDonell.....	82
Missing persons	
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	82
Hydro rates	
Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	82
Employment standards	
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	83
Government services	
Mr. Jim McDonell.....	83
Long-term care	
Mme France Gélinas	83
Air quality	
Mr. Michael Harris.....	83
Gasoline prices	
Mme France Gélinas	84
Private members' public business	
The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller)	84

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Throne speech debate / Débat sur le discours du trône

Mr. Lou Rinaldi.....	84
Ms. Daiene Vernile	85
L'hon. Marie-France Lalonde	86
Mr. Mike Colle.....	87
Mr. Jim McDonell.....	87
Mr. Percy Hatfield.....	88
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti	88
Mr. Michael Harris.....	88
Mr. Mike Colle.....	88
Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	89
Mr. Wayne Gates	92
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti	92
Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	92

Mr. Jagmeet Singh	93
Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	93
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	93
Mr. Granville Anderson	96
Mr. Jim McDonell.....	96
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	97
Ms. Soo Wong.....	97
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	97
Hon. Steven Del Duca.....	98
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti.....	100
Mr. Jim McDonell.....	101
Mr. Wayne Gates	101
Hon. Glen R. Murray.....	102
Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	102
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti.....	102
Mr. Todd Smith.....	102
Debate deemed adjourned	104

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the position of the various groups of the population. It is a very interesting and informative study of the social and economic conditions of the country.

2. The second part of the report deals with the political situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the political conditions of the country.

3. The third part of the report deals with the cultural situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the cultural conditions of the country.

4. The fourth part of the report deals with the economic situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the economic conditions of the country.

5. The fifth part of the report deals with the social situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the social conditions of the country.

6. The sixth part of the report deals with the legal situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the legal conditions of the country.

7. The seventh part of the report deals with the educational situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the educational conditions of the country.

8. The eighth part of the report deals with the health situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the health conditions of the country.

9. The ninth part of the report deals with the environmental situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the environmental conditions of the country.

10. The tenth part of the report deals with the international situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the international conditions of the country.

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the position of the various groups of the population. It is a very interesting and informative study of the social and economic conditions of the country.

2. The second part of the report deals with the political situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the political conditions of the country.

3. The third part of the report deals with the cultural situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the cultural conditions of the country.

4. The fourth part of the report deals with the economic situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the economic conditions of the country.

5. The fifth part of the report deals with the social situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the social conditions of the country.

6. The sixth part of the report deals with the legal situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the legal conditions of the country.

7. The seventh part of the report deals with the educational situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the educational conditions of the country.

8. The eighth part of the report deals with the health situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the health conditions of the country.

9. The ninth part of the report deals with the environmental situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the environmental conditions of the country.

10. The tenth part of the report deals with the international situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative study of the international conditions of the country.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 14 September 2016

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 14 septembre 2016

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 13, 2016, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): When we last debated this bill, the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation had the floor.

Hon. David Zimmer: I was speaking yesterday. We stopped at 6 o'clock and I had two minutes and six seconds left on my rotation. I ran in here to finish the last two minutes and I'm still out of breath.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It will take you two minutes to get your breath.

Hon. David Zimmer: This is a very important issue. We have to get the electricity system up and running in Ontario in a way that will benefit voters, that will benefit businesses and that, in turn, will benefit our economy. To the extent that it benefits our economy over the long term, that's good for our families, that's good for our children and that's good for our grandchildren.

So what has the government done to get the electricity system on a strong and sustainable footing? We have provided a way to reduce electricity costs for the typical consumer. That is done through the mechanism of a rebate on the provincial portion of the HST. In addition to that, there are other mechanisms to relieve the burden of costs on industry.

We are addressing the needs of the average consumer. We are addressing the concerns of industry and we are also, then, keeping an eye on the long-term planning to improve the infrastructure of the electricity system in Ontario. There are a variety of mechanisms that were referred to in the throne speech that will provide a stable electricity system for the province of Ontario, which is something that we all need.

My last comment: I would say that this is a challenging file. It's a difficult file, but this government is up to the challenge. The plan is outlined in the throne speech.

Thank you, Speaker, for allowing me my remaining two minutes and six seconds.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): You're worth every minute, Minister.

Questions and comments?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I appreciate the comments made by the honourable member. However, when we heard the speech from the throne, we found it very disappointing. Here we have a government that has been in power for 13 years, and it's like driving a 13-year-old car where the muffler is shot, it needs new brakes and the tires are bald, but they think that by putting a new starter in, that car will be just perfect. Well, you still have a 13-year-old car that's old and tired.

They talked about hydro rates and giving relief to Ontarians. It's rather disappointing: They referenced HST, but really and truly it's the provincial portion of the HST, which is 8%. Now, I have been asked, "Does that really provide some relief for people?" Well, sure. But keep in mind, a little over a year ago, this government took away the 10% benefit that consumers were in fact enjoying. They voted to take it away—the 10%—and now they're putting 8% back on. So I have a challenge with that.

The other thing that I was really concerned about and that was alarming to me was the fact that there was not one mention of natural gas. Now, keep in mind, Union Gas is head-officed in Chatham. They employ hundreds of people in Chatham, thousands throughout Ontario. Not once did they mention natural gas. That was a big kerfuffle back when they first leaked it out several months ago. Now, having not mentioned it, my concern is that the delivery charges should in fact be a separate line item.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yesterday's debate I found incredibly interesting because the public relations exercise that we all went through on Monday with a reboot of this Legislature—or a changing of the channel, if you will, of this Legislature—was lost on the majority of the speakers from yesterday because the level of insensitivity, if you will, to the hydro issue in the province of Ontario was there in volumes.

Last night, actually, in Fort Erie, 150 residents came out; the member from Niagara Falls has just shared this information. They were crying. The people were crying. They were screaming. They were angry. They were throwing their bills at the organizers. What happened on Monday was really quite incredible because the Wynne government's response to this pain, this anguish, this turmoil that they have put the people of this province through, is to offer them 36 cents a day in relief with this rebate—this rebate which, really, will make no difference in the lives of the people of this province.

So to change the channel—that didn't work. The news yesterday was very clear. This was just an exercise in public relations. The people of this province deserve so much more. You know, 66,000 Ontarians were cut off their hydro last year—66,000 who could not pay their hydro bill. We all know, as MPPs, because we deal with these issues in our offices, that it costs \$40 to \$100 to actually hook up the hydro once again.

This is a government in free fall who have forgotten who they work for, who have forgotten who they serve. We are here on this side of the House to consistently remind them who they should be putting first in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Minister without Portfolio?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I would like to talk about Ontario's speech from the throne, specifically about our balanced plan to build Ontario up for everyone. Our plan really talked about creating jobs and growth and helping people in their everyday lives. The throne speech started out by outlining how we were on the right track when it came to employment and also when it came to our economy, one of the strongest provincial economies in the country; also strength when it comes to jobs.

We have responded to people's concerns, as you all know, when it comes to electricity. We've also helped families find affordable child care by creating an additional 100,000 licensed spaces within the next five years, starting in 2017. We're going to introduce electoral finance reform. We're also continuing to make sure that our young people have the right tools for a changing workforce. We're building on a health care system that everyone can rely on, and we're investing at record levels to build new hospitals, schools, roads, bridges and transit in communities across Ontario.

0910

As Associate Minister of Education responsible for early years and child care, I would like to talk specifically about child care, and how high-quality child care is an essential start to a child's journey in terms of education and supporting their social, emotional and cognitive development.

I am proud of our commitment to create 100,000 new spaces in the next five years, because what this is going to do is double the capacity of licensed child care spaces in the province. By doing that, we are going to give parents the support they need in their daily lives, but we are also going to create a healthy environment for our young people to thrive and flourish. I think the bottom line is, that is probably one of the most important pieces in our speech.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker.

We heard the minister say that this throne speech addressed the needs of the people, but I would say to you, Speaker, that the throne speech certainly addressed the needs of the Liberal Party; there's no question.

This is a billion-dollar band-aid. I asked the Premier yesterday where those billion dollars are coming from,

because it has nothing to do with correcting or fixing the mess that they have created in the energy sector. It doesn't lower energy bills. It's not going to fix anything. It's just taking your money—the taxpayers' money, another billion dollars a year—and giving it back to you in the other hand—

Interjection: Plus interest.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: —plus interest now. You'd think it would probably be another \$35 million a year on top of that for interest.

They're just giving our own money back to us to appease us. That's why I say to you that it has nothing whatsoever to do with fixing the problem.

I could understand, after listening to the Premier in her answer to me yesterday—they don't get the problem. She told us—stood in the Legislature yesterday and said—that we make a profit from selling our power to the United States and Quebec—a profit. They don't understand the difference between revenue and profit. They have revenue that comes in, yes, but they have expenses that are greater.

I'll read to you, Speaker, from page 216 of the Auditor General's annual report, where she said, "Ontario paid exporters a net total of \$32.6 million to take our power." We paid the United States and Quebec. That is just in a short period of time. It actually comes up to several billion dollars. Since the beginning, it has been \$3.6 billion that we've paid them. That's not a profit, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The new title for the minister is Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.

Hon. David Zimmer: Thank you, Speaker.

The throne speech had a lot of other things in it also. I remind people that the throne speech pointed out that we are adding 350,000 hours of nursing care and about 1.3 million hours of personal support care for seniors. We are also addressing the affordable child care issues by creating an additional 100,000 licensed child care spaces over the next five years.

There's the whole matter of the electoral financing reform measures that were highlighted in the throne speech.

In the throne speech, there was also significant comment on the investments we will be continuing to make in infrastructure matters such as hospitals, schools, roads and transit across the communities across Ontario, for the benefit of big-city Ontario and small-town Ontario. That investment alone represents \$160 billion over 12 years.

We are also playing a significant role in reducing our debt-to-GDP ratio, which, if you analyze it closely, is levelling out. That augurs good news for our plan to have the budget balanced by 2017, as we have committed to. When you read through the throne speech, all of the issues and matters that we are going to tackle in a responsible way are still predicated on a balanced budget in 2017.

So in addition to all of the comments addressing the electricity issues, there are many, many other good things in the throne speech. It was a good throne speech; it

reflects good government by the Premier of Ontario and my caucus colleagues.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I want to wish everyone a good morning starting off here and want to say that it's a very big privilege for me, as leader of Ontario's New Democrats, to respond initially, on behalf of our caucus, to the speech from the throne. I know that all members of the caucus, in fact, are looking forward to this debate, and I'm going to be dividing my time this morning with the member for Essex.

For the past three or four months we've been back home in our ridings, all of us, all of the MPPs in this chamber, listening to people. I know that that's what we've been doing. New Democrats go back to our ridings when the House takes its breaks, go back and listen to the people in our ridings and listen to their priorities.

When I heard that the Premier was proroguing the Legislature so she could deliver a new throne speech, I hoped that we would see a real change of course for this government. I hoped that the Premier had been listening to people too and that she'd heard the same stories that I've heard. I hoped that the Premier would be making big changes and taking bold steps right now to make life better for the people of this province.

As New Democrats—and as Ontarians, frankly—hope is in our DNA. We believe passionately that together we can all do better. We can build a better future together and we can make sure that everyone shares in the opportunities that this great province has to offer. That sense of optimism, Speaker, that desire to lift each other up so we're all better off together, is what drives so many people in this province, each and every day. And it never fails to inspire me.

I'm thinking about the incredible health care workers—the nurses, hospital workers, technologists and technicians, PSWs, doctors—everyone who takes our hand when we're not well and helps us through our most vulnerable moments, helping us to heal, helping us to live better. They believe that we're all better off when we take better care of each other.

I'm thinking of the remarkable education workers—the teachers, the support staff, the early childhood educators and the child care workers in this province—who pour every ounce of themselves into doing what's best for our children. There is nothing better, as a mom—I think pretty much anybody would agree that there is nothing better than watching what our kids can do when they get a new opportunity. And we owe it to the fact that so many education workers devote themselves to making sure our kids get the support they need to succeed, inside and outside the classroom. Our publicly funded schools are founded on our belief that every child and every young person should have the opportunities that they need to reach their full potential no matter where they come from, no matter how much money their parents earn, no matter who they are.

It's that same belief that together we stand taller, together we reach higher, together we are stronger when

all of us are stronger too. It's that belief that leads so many women and men to work long and hard, to give everything they've got to build a better future for their families and, at the end of the day, to reach even deeper and give back to their communities. Ontarians have this incredible desire to build a better province and a better future. It's that unwavering optimism, Speaker, that genuine belief that tomorrow should be better here in Ontario that drives millions of Ontarians to do the work that we do.

Everyone who lives in Ontario knows what a great place it is, and people are working hard to make this province an even better home, now and for the next generation. But to realize our potential, we need a government that makes the right decisions, day in and day out. We need a government that does everything it can to take down the barriers that stand in people's way. We need a government that takes action to help folks lift their families up and improve their lives. We need a government that protects the public services that people count on, like our hospitals and our children's schools, so they're there when families need them.

0920

Most importantly, we need a government that makes the right choices for the next generation. As I listened to the throne speech on Monday, I wanted to hear about the specific actions that this government was going to take to help people. I was waiting to hear the priorities of Ontarians reflected in firm commitments and detailed plans by this government. After 13 years, we need action.

Il faut agir pour améliorer la vie des gens.

Good words just are not good enough. Because for all the hope and incredible optimism that people have about our province, the truth is that more and more people feel that we've reached a tipping point here in Ontario. People can see that we need to have big changes. Big changes need to be made soon if we want our kids, our young people, to have a better future right here in Ontario.

Speaker, people see it in their own lives. They see it when they try to find opportunities for their kids or help their aging parents get the care that they need. For a lot of people, life is actually getting a lot harder. People have less security, and good opportunities are few and far between. For so many people, no matter how hard they work, they just can't get ahead. Costs keep going up and people are struggling to keep up. When the bills come every month, people literally hold their breath, and at the very same time as that, costs are rising.

We have costs rising, bills increasing, but wages remain flat in the province of Ontario. So when the Premier talks about our economic recovery and growth, a lot of people wonder who the heck it is she's talking about, who exactly is getting ahead, because people don't see it in their own lives. But instead of helping, this Premier keeps making choices that actually make things worse.

In our schools, we see cuts to special education supports. We see teachers and education workers who have to pay for supplies out of their own pockets, and parents see a government that refuses to fix our schools and

maintain them properly. There is a \$15-billion repair backlog in our schools today, and it's the result of years of neglect and underfunding by Liberal and Conservative governments who did not share the priorities of parents.

When young families need care, they should be able to find a spot in a high-quality, licensed public child care system, where the costs are affordable for every family. But that's not what we have here in Ontario today. Over the past few years, this government has actually forced municipalities—Sarnia, for example—to shut down their child care centres and close those spaces for families in those communities.

On issue after issue, instead of helping people, the Liberals are making life more difficult. In this year's budget, the Liberals tried to nearly double the cost of prescription drugs for seniors, and they only backed down because seniors and New Democrats spoke up and forced the Liberals to change course.

When it comes to the costs that people face every month, now the Liberals are planning to plow ahead with the sell-off of Hydro One. They've already gone too far down that road, Speaker. But against all evidence, against all the advice of the Financial Accountability Officer, against the will of 80% of the people of this province who say it is not the right thing to do, the Liberals are plowing ahead with the sell-off of Hydro One. Hydro One should belong to the people of Ontario, now and forever. But this Premier has decided to sell it off to private investors who have one objective, frankly, which is to make higher profits off the hydro bills that Ontarians are paying. Over and over, this Premier keeps making choices that make life harder for the people of Ontario, and that has got to change.

You know, Monday's throne speech could have gone a long way to help. It could have done so much to give immediate relief to families, to improve the quality of work in this province, to stop the sell-off of Hydro One and to make sure that everyone has health care they can count on and our kids have the supports that they need to succeed in the classroom. But that's not what we heard, Speaker.

After listening to the throne speech, I can tell you that New Democrats will keep working for the real action that people need to see on health care, hydro, jobs and all of the priorities that matter the most to the people of Ontario. Without real action now to make a difference in people's lives, we won't be able to build a future that we know is possible in Ontario, a future where we actually reverse the growing gap between those who get ahead and those who fall behind, a future where workers can actually find good jobs that lift them up into the middle class, a future where our economy is more sustainable and the prosperity that we create is shared by everyone who calls Ontario home, a future where we continue to welcome the world and do everything we can to fight inequality, tackle racism and eliminate systemic discrimination.

That's the future we want, Speaker. That's the future that we need to build here in Ontario, a future where

every First Nations community has clean drinking water, where they have safe, affordable housing in every First Nations community and proper health care in every First Nations community, and where we lead the fight against climate change and make sure that northerners and low-income families aren't stuck paying the highest price while big polluters are left off the hook. It's a future where we work to eliminate poverty and solve homelessness in all our communities, where we do everything we can to lift people up, and where people can see every single day that their government is actually working for them and actually making a positive difference in all of our lives.

There is no doubt in my mind that we can build a future that is more fair, more just, more prosperous and much more sustainable, and we can do that together, but to get there we need big changes, starting right now.

Let me focus on health care for a minute. Health care is something that you don't think about until you need it, but then it needs to be there for you. That's why we built our universal public health care system, where the care that you get is based on what you need, not how deep your pockets are. In Ontario today, the Liberals are making choices that actually undermine the future of public health care and put it at risk for the next generation.

Patients are waiting longer in emergency rooms. They're waiting longer for surgeries. They're waiting longer for the home care that they need. The wait time, in fact, for folks who are waiting in hospital to go into long-term care has increased by—get ready for this—280% since the Liberals took office.

And our hospitals are facing cuts year after year by this Liberal government, which promised the opposite. More than 1,400 nursing jobs have been cut. That's just since the beginning of 2015. Hundreds of health care workers have been laid off, from Windsor to London, from Kitchener–Waterloo to Hamilton, North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins, Barrie, Ottawa and here in the GTA; hundreds and hundreds of health care workers are no longer looking after my family and yours.

I've talked to patients like Jeff in London, who said that he had to wait months on end for his hip replacement. He's not able to do the things that he loves to do in the meantime, and that wait is affecting his ability to work. His big concern, on top of all of that, is that the only answer he gets is more prescriptions to take away the pain, instead of actually dealing with his physical problem and his hip replacement surgery.

0930

I've talked to nurses like Rebecca. Rebecca told me that her workplace is so short-staffed and working conditions are so overwhelmingly overcrowded in their emergency rooms that the situation right now is worse than she has ever seen in her considerable career as a nurse in this province.

Our hospitals are closing beds, contracting out services to private companies and laying off workers and health care professionals. That's the Liberal health care system in the province of Ontario.

It was New Democrats who revealed just last spring that many of our hospitals are, in fact, running at over 100% capacity month after month. The gold standard for capacity of hospital beds being filled is 85%. That's not even the gold standard; that's the worldwide standard for hospital occupancy rates—85%. In Ontario, it is over 100% consistently in most hospitals.

We also revealed that more than \$3.2 billion in unfunded, urgent repairs that need to be done inside our hospitals are sitting and waiting for that work, but the Liberals still refuse to tell us how each local hospital shapes up. So much for transparency.

There is a growing crisis, a silent crisis in our health care system, but the throne speech said almost nothing. That was the most deafening of silences.

The Liberals have no plan to tackle overcrowding in our hospital hallways. We have hospitals now where, in the hallway, there are labels that say, "Hallway room 1. Hallway room 2. Hallway room 3." I don't remember having that, Speaker. For years and years, we didn't have that kind of problem in our hospitals, but under the Liberals' watch, we have hallways that are now labelled as if they were rooms.

What kind of dignity and what kind of privacy does that allow the people in Ontario who need hospital services? None whatsoever. Shame on this government for letting things deteriorate to that point.

They have no plan to stop the cuts in our hospitals. They have no plan, as I said, to tackle the overcrowding. They have no plan to protect public health care and make sure that our local hospitals are actually there when people need them.

New Democrats are going to keep fighting to change that. We're going to keep working to build a health care system that actually puts people first. Our hospitals need to be stable. We need to have stable and predictable funding for our hospitals that keeps up with the growing costs of inflation and population growth. At a bare minimum, that's what this hospital system in our province requires. Each and every year, at a bare minimum, that's what's needed. We're going to keep fighting to protect and strengthen our public health care so that it's there not just for our parents as they age, but for our kids too and, yes, for their kids.

We need action now, and it can't stop with health care. We need to see real action to make life more affordable, too. I don't know if the Premier knows this, but since she was elected leader of the Liberal Party and took office as the Premier of Ontario, peak hydro rates have increased by more than 50%—just since she's been the Premier of this province. That's her record on hydro: higher costs for families and seniors and higher costs for businesses, which makes it harder for them to hire new workers.

Six years ago, in September 2010, the New Democrats were the party that called on the Liberals to take the HST off the hydro bills as just a first step to lowering the bills. Six years ago, when the Liberals brought the HST to Ontario, something that the majority of Ontarians were against—six years ago, we said that we shouldn't be

forced to pay a sales tax, an HST, on a basic necessity like keeping the lights on. The HST should never have been put on those bills in the first place, and the only reason we have the HST on hydro today is because the Liberals put it there.

For 75 months, people have been forced to pay the HST on their hydro bills and now, finally, finally, six years later, the Premier says she's going to start giving folks a rebate on their HST. I guess that's good news. It means a bit of relief for people when they pay the bills. But the Premier's rebate also raises a lot of questions. Why make people wait for four months? Why force folks to pay the HST on hydro for four more months before getting the relief? How long is this rebate really going to last? What's going to prevent the Liberals from cancelling it at any point? People need relief now.

C'est maintenant qu'il faut agir.

So my message to the Premier is clear and straightforward: Take the HST off hydro once and for all. Do it already. Get rid of it for good. When families and seniors open up their next hydro bill, they should see an 8% cut in their costs. They should see that the provincial portion of the HST has been removed, effective immediately. That's what should happen.

Don't stop there. We have to do so much more to lower hydro bills for the long term and prevent those costs from getting any worse. We have to stop the sell-off of Hydro One—stop it in its tracks. We have to stop any further privatization overall of our hydro system. Privatization has been the biggest bane, the biggest problem in our electricity system. For 20 years, Conservative and Liberal governments have privatized critical parts of our electricity generating and transmission systems. That's what has happened. It is no secret. It is no curiosity. There is no kind of smoking gun somewhere that we have to find to determine why things went wrong in our electricity system. It is as plain as the nose on your face. It was the Conservatives that started privatizing the generation of electricity—they wanted to go a lot further; they held back—and the Liberals came in right behind them and finished the job and continued privatizing more and more. And now they're privatizing Hydro One. It has driven costs up for everyone.

Today, our neighbours, the bookend provinces which we sit in between, Manitoba and Quebec, both have public hydro systems—completely public hydro systems like we used to have. And you know what? They pay half or less than what we pay. They pay half or less of what we pay in their hydro bills, so it's no secret. There's no secret. The bottom line is that the mess in our hydro system started with the Conservatives and has continued under the Liberals, and it's time to make big changes in our hydro system. It's time to put the people of this province in the driver's seat and make decisions that don't just work for the government's friends, whether it's a Conservative government or it's a Liberal government, but decisions that actually work for all of us. That's what needs to happen. The throne speech on Monday should have announced that the government would stop privatiz-

ing Hydro One, but once again, the Premier was silent when it comes to the kind of real action the people need to see.

Let me talk about jobs for a minute. We need to take action now—now—to protect and create good jobs in this province. In fact, action should have been taken long before now to improve the quality of work for millions of people across this great province and to make sure that every worker can actually support their loved ones and build a better future for their families. That's not a lot to ask. This might have been the biggest disappointment in Monday's throne speech, at a time when so many workers are struggling to find good jobs, when young people are working full-time just trying to find work, when so many workers have lost their good jobs and now find themselves too young to retire but too old to start over, and when so many of the jobs being created don't come with the decent pay and security that every worker needs.

0940

I'm disappointed and frustrated beyond belief by this government's failure to act, and by its lack of focus on one of the most pressing challenges faced by young people and workers of every age. We've lost 300,000 good manufacturing jobs in this province over the last decade—again, while this government was at the helm. And across Ontario, between 2003 and 2011, while this government sat in office, the share of employees in that time—this is important—working for minimum wage in the province of Ontario more than doubled. Nearly one in every 10 workers is now taking home a minimum wage today that is simply too low to get by on, never mind to get ahead. Worst of all, the explosion of precarious work in this province is entrenching the very inequalities that social democrats and progressives are committed to eradicating.

Now, the good news here is that we can change this. We have everything we need in Ontario to make sure our economy actually works for working people. We just need to see bold action from the government. We need to see the kind of action that the Liberals refuse to take. We have to protect temporary workers from predatory temp agencies by guaranteeing equal pay and fair treatment for every temporary worker. The government needs to bring forward changes in the Employment Standards Act to ensure that every worker has the ability to care for their loved ones and spend time with their family, and can share in all the benefits that this province has to offer.

We have to lift people up, raise the bar and make sure that no working family is stuck living in poverty. We have to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour in Ontario. Yesterday, Premier Notley and the NDP government in Alberta passed regulations which will lift Alberta's minimum wage to \$15 an hour. Ontario should be leading too. We should raise our minimum wage to \$15 an hour.

On top of that, on top of these real changes that will make a difference in so many people's lives, we have to make it easier for the next generation of workers to join a union and join the middle class. The facts are clear. The

facts are very clear. When workers can join together, speak up together and bargain together for a better deal, it's not just those workers and their families who are better off; our entire province is better off, too. Workers and unions always stand up to make more room for people inside the middle class, and that's exactly what we need today: more room for people inside the middle class.

We need action to make it easier for young workers, struggling workers, part-time workers, contract workers—workers across the board—to join a union and see the benefits of joining the middle class.

Nous devons renforcer notre classe moyenne.

We can't let barriers stand in the way of a better future for the next generation. Joining a union and obtaining a first contract is the best ticket into the middle class, and growing the middle class is the best way to build a future for all of us in this province.

This is the kind of action that we need to see in Ontario today, and the Premier's throne speech could have done so much more to make a difference in people's lives right now.

I was hoping for change on Monday, but that's not what we saw. The Premier decided to keep on cutting hospitals, keep selling Hydro One and keep on refusing to take real steps to improve the quality of work for millions of Ontarians. We will hold the Premier accountable for those decisions, but even more importantly, New Democrats will stand up with Ontarians. We will speak up for what matters to the people of this province, and we will be the voice for action and the bold changes that people need to see. We will push this government hard to take action that improves health care, makes life more affordable and more secure, and makes the quality of work so much better for so many more workers. We will put forward a positive vision, based on real action that will improve life for people across this province.

New Democrats know our priorities, Speaker. We know our priorities very well. We know them very well because they're the priorities of people. New Democrats are working for this generation and the next, and we are not going to stop until we build a better future for all our young people, for all people, right here in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I want to congratulate our leader, Andrea Horwath, on a wonderful, inspiring speech, which actually should make up the next speech from the throne for an NDP government, when we finally turn this province around.

Speaker, I am honoured to follow our leader to speak in response to the Wynne government's speech from the throne. We have had some time over the summer to consult and commiserate with our communities, to listen to them, to have those impromptu meetings in Tim Hortons and the restaurants all around our ridings, and to connect with the people who sent us here.

It has never been clearer that our communities are suffering and that they require and demand a government that responds to their needs, that understands that times

have never been tougher and that they are losing hope, not only for themselves and their current situations, but for their family members and their friends and colleagues.

The opportunities that this government promises, and that we have heard from successive speeches from the throne and budgets that have been laid out from successive governments, have not presented themselves in a way that benefits our communities and the people who live there.

That's why we are sent here today. We continue to persevere to address those issues and to highlight where the Wynne government has continued to fail glaringly. We know that hydro rates in this province have just recently cost the Wynne government a seat in this House. The Scarborough–Rouge River by-election was a message sent to the government that, frankly, if the direction isn't changed, they'll soon be on their way out of this building. And it couldn't happen soon enough, Speaker.

We know that across this province, from one quadrant to another—the north, the northwest, the east and the south—people are having to choose between paying their hydro or paying for food. This is Ontario. This is the most prosperous province in Confederation, and yet we're at a point now where one of the most basic amenities is no longer affordable.

Speaker, I'll bring you back to 1905. Some on the Liberal benches may remember the government of the day. It was the government of James Whitney, who was a Conservative.

The minister of energy and hydro at that time was a gentleman called Adam Beck. We should all know the legacy of Adam Beck. We should all know the history of Adam Beck. Often, when I think about hydro rates and I think about the nature of hydroelectricity generation and distribution in this province, I go back to Sir Adam Beck, because he is the father of public hydro in Ontario. Sir Adam Beck knew at that time that electrification and distribution of hydro and access to electricity was not only vital for the growth of this province and the prosperity of the province, but he knew that it had to be affordable. In that light, he has left us with not only a legacy of public power and the growth that has ensued because we had a public power system, but he has left us with some great quotes that I'll give to you right now for the benefit of the House.

0950

Speaker, he's quoted as saying, "We must deliver power to such an extent that the poorest working man will have light in his home." That's Sir Adam Beck, a Conservative, talking about the working man, at that time, in 1905. We would be hard-pressed to hear those words, I believe, from the right wing at this time.

Another quote from Adam Beck, as he flipped the switch on Ontario Hydro: As he flipped the switch to light up this province, he said, "For the people." That was top of mind for Adam Beck: "For the people." And shouldn't it be that in perpetuity? Shouldn't we continue to honour that legacy, to understand the benefit that we have in a public power regime?

Mr. Ted McMeekin: Wasn't it free, too?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It was at cost, and it should have been at cost. But the decisions that are being made by the Wynne government, by Kathleen Wynne and successive hydro ministers who have failed us, the decisions that have been made to privatize Hydro One now leave us with a legacy not for the people but for the profit, because the profit of that system will now go to multinationals that will absolutely rain down a level of unattainable, insufficient and expensive power that this province has never seen before.

And we have examples of it. We have examples of it dating back to 1999, where, in a brief moment of time, the Conservative government of the day, Mike Harris, allowed himself to be a full Conservative—showed his true colours—when they went full privatization. They deregulated the industry. We saw power costs at that time increase almost overnight. Immediately, we saw power jump 30%, in a time where the province was struggling economically, in a time where interest rates were certainly higher than they are today. We saw power costs explode in this province. What did they do? They high-tailed it back to some measure of public ownership. They cut their losses, but we are left with that legacy and we see it every day on our hydro bills as the stranded asset, the stranded liability that we see. That's about a \$19-billion price tag that we have yet to fully eradicate.

Our leader, Andrea—I referenced that that should make up the context of a speech from the throne. If people are listening today, they will find hope in that message, that there is a political party in Ontario that has their needs as a priority, that has listened. And how do you know that? Well, let's look back six years, when then-Premier Dalton McGuinty and Finance Minister Dwight Duncan, who was from our neck of the woods down in Windsor, decided it was a great deal to partner with the Harper government at the time to bring in and impose the harmonized sales tax on Ontarians. Now, New Democrats joined with the people of this province to fight tooth and nail, to fight the imposition of the HST. It was a fight that ultimately was not won, but at that time we said, "If you're going to bring it in, at the very least exclude hydro and natural gas, exclude those from the harmonized sales tax, from the HST." These are inevitable requirements to live in this province. You have to heat your home and you have to keep the lights on. So it was a common sense proposal. It was something that we thought, at the very least—as we knew that costs were going to rise for everyday items in this province—the government could understand that they could do for the province.

Now, six years later, we see they have finally come to their senses and have understood that people need some remedy. They need some relief. You're offering them 8% after we've seen, under the Kathleen Wynne Liberal government, a 50% increase over the last four years in hydro rates—a meagre, measly 8%.

I'm having a fun time reading the comments, the editorial comments, as of the last couple of days on this

plan, because it is indicative of the fact that this government has done so very little for the people of the province that I don't think there is anything you can do from here on in that will reverse your fortunes. You are in a tailspin. Your government has made the wrong decisions, time and time again. Whether it's the privatization of Hydro, whether it's the cancellation of gas plants, whether it's eHealth, whether it's public-private partnerships that have cost this province \$9 billion, you fail the province every time. It's time to reverse the course, and the New Democrats will be doing that.

The speech—the would-be speech from the throne—can we call it that? The would-be speech from the throne that we should anticipate after the next election—we can't wait. The speech from the throne that our leader Andrea Horwath will deliver will present a remedy—

Mr. James J. Bradley: Presumptuous over there.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Presumptuous? It is inevitable. You're leading us down that path, and people can't wait to get rid of your government. They cannot wait—believe me. And we're going to help them. We're going to help them get there because we know that people in this province prioritize their health care above everything else. That's one thing I think we can all agree on. We all talk to the same people and when it comes down to it, the health of their family, their friends, their community is paramount.

Yet, again, under the Kathleen Wynne government, we have seen a degradation of our health care system to the extent that we've never seen before. People are being warehoused in our hospital system, as we've heard. We have hallway health care, where you're lucky to get a room, you're lucky to see a physician for a brief time, and you are warehoused in overcrowded hospitals. That's your legacy.

We have an infrastructure deficit where our hospitals are falling apart and the government doesn't even want to recognize its own failure. You can't bring yourself to actually see those numbers, let alone present a clear picture of the infrastructure deficit that exists in our hospitals. I'll give you an example just in Windsor, the other day. We know that they are struggling with an antiquated, outdated sterilization system in a hospital that certainly predates my birth and many others in the city—I think it's over 100 years old—Hôtel-Dieu Grace hospital. But the system that is there is breaking down. That is directly as a result of the cuts that this government has imposed on our province and on our system. We see front-line care workers being fired, nurses being fired in every community across this province, directly affecting the health and the well-being of our friends and family.

That's your legacy. That's the legacy of Kathleen Wynne. That's what we have come to expect. But we can expect so much more. We can expect the next speech from the throne, from an NDP government, to address the priorities of the people that we hear so clearly, not address the priorities of the profiteers that have been knocking on the door and having that door swung wide

open by the Kathleen Wynne government for years and years.

Our leader, Andrea Horwath, spoke about the quality and the nature of the employment and jobs in this province. Anyone who is entering or re-entering the job market these days knows that it has never been more challenging. Access to good-quality employment, a good job, let alone a career, is almost unattainable. We have an explosion of part-time, precarious work. We have an explosion of temporary agencies that are now the mainstay of employment recruitment.

1000

I can remember a day when the back pages of the classifieds were full of help wanted advertisements, and these were good jobs. At 18 years old, you could find a decent job. You could find something that allowed you to support your university education or your post-secondary education. You could find a job that could pay the rent and pay the utilities and maybe give you a little bit of leisure spending.

No longer, Speaker. People in this province are having an absolute challenge to find gainful employment, and why is that? Well, under the Kathleen Wynne government, we've seen a lackadaisical approach to employment standards. We've seen neglect on the part of supporting improvements through organized labour. We have seen a government that frankly is a neo-Liberal government that has a laissez-faire approach around economic development: Let the market create itself. Let the market spur its own economic development.

Well, let me tell you, you have a role to play. You have a role to play in supporting job creators who are there, who are innovating, who are looking to hire. You have the ability as a government to enable and enact supportive measures, like my colleague from London, in work-integrated learning through our post-secondary institutions.

You have great ideas. You have the ability to ban temporary agencies from paying workers less than their colleagues make, working right beside them. You have the ability to do that, but you haven't. You have abdicated your responsibility. Why? Because we believe that you just don't care, or you're tone-deaf to the needs of workers in this province.

That's why New Democrats, time and time again but particularly now, faced with this crisis, have presented you, as a government, with some really tangible ideas, some real tangible, attainable ideas. One: Ban the ability for temp agencies to pay their workers less than the workers they work alongside. You could do that today. You can do that today, and it's something that workers are wanting.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's stealing from workers.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Essentially, you're sanctioning wage theft from workers in this province who have no other recourse but to go through a temp agency to get a job.

Speaker, 10% of workers in this province work for minimum wage—\$11.75 an hour, I believe—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Mostly women.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: —mostly women and vulnerable new immigrants who need to provide for their families.

This government can follow the lead of the Premier of Alberta, Rachel Notley, and her government, who just recently raised the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. They are showing true leadership in this country. They understand the priorities of the people.

Speaker, I don't know if you know—we've had many discussions, but for the benefit of the House, prior to being elected I was a member of the Labourers' International Union of North America, LIUNA, Local 625. I worked on infrastructure projects, built bridges and roads. It was a good job. I started when I was 19 years old and worked my way through, on and off seasonally, when I was going to university. Then I got married. There was always a good job there for me through the union. I made a good wage. I probably made 25 bucks an hour as an apprentice, getting up towards 30, 32 bucks an hour as a journeyman labourer. It enabled me to provide for my family. It enabled me to pay off university debt. It enabled me to have benefits like dental and health care and prescription drugs. It enabled me to be protected at work so that if I was hurt or injured, they couldn't fire me.

I was able to be a part of that union because the construction sector in Ontario is a card-based certification process. You get to join a union if you and 51% of your colleagues decide it's time to organize your workplace. You sign a card, you say, "We're ready," you submit that to the labour board and you become unionized. You make that decision; it is a worker-based decision.

But we are the only ones in this province—the construction sector—who get that privilege. Everyone else has to have a vote that is sometimes biased and influenced by overzealous and heavy-handed employers.

The fairest way, the best way for workers to organize is card certification. It provides for a measure of security. It brings people into the middle class. It enables people like me to be able to have a job, to be able to provide for my family, to buy my first vehicle.

There are thousands of workers out there today—tens of thousands—who would love to have that opportunity, but are blocked from that opportunity because this government hasn't changed the rules. Why is it that one sector, one industry in this province has the ability and others don't? Do other sectors not work as hard as construction workers? I would argue no. I would argue that service workers work just as hard, if not harder, every day. They deserve that same right. It's time for this government to bring in card certification in this province.

I did a little bit of research, knowing that I was going to have the ability and the privilege to speak today. It may have been quoted here—I'm sure one of my brilliant NDP colleagues has quoted and referenced this in relation to hydro rates—but I'm going to give a shout-out to Tom Parkin. Tom is a researcher. He has got a long, storied career in the progressive movement and labour rights.

Tom, thanks for putting this out on Twitter today. He quickly let us know that the rates in Manitoba per 375 kilowatt hours—in Manitoba today, you'd pay \$36.34. In Quebec, you'd pay \$33.60. In Ottawa today, you'd pay \$70.96—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Double.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: —more than double the rate of the two provinces adjacent to us, two provinces that have fully public hydro systems for the benefit of their people and the benefit of their industries, to be economically sustainable and to use their systems as a strategic asset.

What do we do? We sell it off in a fire sale, because they're out of ideas and they can't make the right decision. It is time, Speaker, that we change this government, if not for hydro, then for a legacy of missteps that have been to the detriment of the people of this province.

We are speaking today in reference to the throne speech. I want to give another shout-out to someone who works tirelessly on behalf of people in the province with disabilities: David Lepofsky. David has been bombarding every MPP, I hope, with the message that we should look at every policy initiative that comes out of this government through the lens of disability and accessibility.

We heard absolutely nothing about accessibility and disability rights through the throne speech yesterday. Years after bringing in the AODA, they have neglected the thousands of people in this province who suffer, who struggle every day to access services. They have done nothing. They won't even initiate any type of oversight on their own AODA. We need a government that addresses that, that gives the opportunity to people in this province who have a disability to access opportunities through employment, to access basic health care services and to access educational services.

We are lagging behind in this province. It's all well to say that you have a plan, but to not put any resources into it and to not have any oversight or governance in it is a shame. It is right for those folks to be speaking out, and you can rest assured that the next throne speech by the new NDP government will address the issues of the disabled in this province, because that's what they deserve and that's what's fair.

1010

Speaker, along with many of my colleagues I want to give thanks to my colleague from Windsor West, Lisa Gretzky, who initiated something quite unique—not unique. What's the word? Brave. She was brave, in that she asked residents of our riding and our adjacent riding to send in their hydro bills to the community office.

Yes, you're shaking your head over there because you would hate to get the hydro bills in your community offices.

She said, "Send me your bills. We need to see these." In a couple of days, she received hundreds of hydro bills from people who are struggling, who can't make ends meet, who don't know where to turn.

Mr. James J. Bradley: And your solution is?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My solution is to fire the Liberal government, to get Kathleen Wynne out of here. That's

the number one solution. But that's not coming from me. Don't take it from me. Read the editorials in the Windsor Star, because after your 8% HST rebate, they're having none of it. Where you might want to go on vacation after, Minister, is to Nunavut. Go see what the hydro rates are in Nunavut.

Speaker, just yesterday I received another Facebook text, and a copy of a hydro bill, from a gentleman who owns a restaurant in LaSalle. I won't mention his name. This is it; he's done. He cannot continue. He had a \$6,000—this is a small, mom-and-pop, greasy-spoon restaurant, the ones that we like to go to. This isn't Big Macs. This isn't McDonald's. This isn't the big chain restaurants. This is just a small, family-run restaurant. He can't do it. He has got a deep fryer. He has got some lights. This isn't the Ritz-Carlton. It's \$6,000 a month.

This is what you've created. These are the economic conditions for small business growth in this province. You are stymieing any type of economic growth or opportunity. And if you don't realize that now, you might realize it after the next election when you're sitting at home looking at your own hydro bill, wondering how you're going to pay for it.

Speaker, they are all tied together. These are ideas and concepts. It is interesting to hear the Progressive Conservative Party try to champion the maintaining of public power in this province. They're against hydro privatization. I call "shenanigans" on that. I highly doubt that, in their heart-of-right-wing hearts, they truly believe that we should have a public utility in this province. They don't want anything public. They don't want universal health care; they don't want universal education; they'd love charter schools, I guarantee it; and they'd want privatization of utilities. There's no question about it. If they say any different, then they should check their membership card and see what party they truly belong to, because that's not the ideology of the Progressive Conservative Party.

If they are to learn from history, I would suggest they go back to Sir Adam Beck. He sounds like a good New Democrat, actually. He sounds like somebody I could have supported—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Had a beer with.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: —or had a beer with, for sure.

I'll leave you with one last quote, Speaker. Sir Adam Beck knew that the profiteers, the vulture capitalists, were going to be coming for this massive entity that distributed power at cost, non-profit. He knew it. He saw it. He had the foresight to understand that this thing could make a huge amount of money, and the banks and the profiteers were just circling like vultures; they were ready. But Adam Beck knew that it was for the benefit of the people that we maintain this as a public asset. He knew it, and he left us with a quote that I hope is ingrained, and should be ingrained, in every member of the Kathleen Wynne Liberal government. I'm going to leave you with it. Maybe the member from St. Catharines already knows it. He has encyclopedic knowledge of many of the great performers in this House.

I quote Adam Beck: "I wish I could live long enough to build a band of iron around hydro, to keep it safe from the politicians."

If I might add, "to keep it safe from the profiteers that have made their way and infiltrated their way into the Liberal government."

Speaker, I am honoured to have the privilege to speak today, and I thank you for your time.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Michael Harris: Here today to watch their daughter and sister, page captain Amy Elder, are her mother, Joanne Weston, and her sister, Emily Elder. They're in the public gallery. Thanks for joining us today.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature, from Accerta, Kathy Rabideau, vice-president and CFO, and Caitlin Zupet, business development manager; and two of my constituents who are here on behalf of the Canadian Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation for IPF Awareness Day, Jim Gillies and Barbara Barr.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: It gives me great pleasure to introduce guests this morning from my riding. They are the parents and grandparents of page Victoria Bailey. Her mother, Erin Bailey, is in the members' gallery, and grandparents Colleen and Dave Robertson. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to welcome a great constituent of mine, Robert Davidson, who is with us at Queen's Park with the Canadian Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation for IPF Awareness Day today. They have a reception starting at 5:30 p.m. today.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I would indulge the House and introduce a small branch of the Jones family—three generations: my nephews Colter and Carson; my brother Chris; my dad, Brian; and Dianne. My father, Brian, taught me everything I needed to know about asking the right questions.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I would like to welcome two long-time friends of mine from high school, actually: Colleen Lyons and Susan Turner, who are visiting Toronto today and have dropped in to Queen's Park. Welcome.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'd like to welcome Mr. Jeff Beirsto, father of page Jesse. Welcome.

Mr. Patrick Brown: It's my pleasure to recognize the mother of one of the new pages, Matthew Maurice. His mother, Carol Ellis, is here, and his stepfather, Don Knight, all the way from Simcoe North.

Mr. Paul Miller: From my riding, I'd like to introduce page Tegan Elliott from Glen Brae school and also

to welcome her mother, Christy Cowan, and her grandmother Sandra Cowan.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'd like to welcome the parents of page captain Cameron Miranda-Radbord, who are here with us today in the gallery: Joanna Radbord and Maretta Miranda.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further introductions? The associate minister—oh, the minister of—

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: Tourism, culture and sport.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Go ahead.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: I still have days myself. Thank you, Speaker, for that kind introduction.

I'm pleased to welcome to Queen's Park today the delegates from the Canadian Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation who are having a reception this evening: Robert Davidson, Barbara Barr, Malcolm Haylock, Jim Gillies, Larkell Banyamin and Andrew Retfalvi. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. It took me a while to come into my head. I'm sorry.

LEGISLATIVE INTERNS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): With us in the Speaker's gallery today are the 10 interns from the Ontario Legislature Intern Program, who are going to interview and hire MPPs today. Please welcome them, and also please welcome the academic director, Dr. Peter Constantinou.

The OLIP interns will spend the next 10 months working with various MPPs. We are thrilled to have them here today in the assembly. I urge all eligible members to participate in this exceptional program.

We welcome the interns with the thought that maybe even the Speaker gets an intern from time to time, but I'm not too sure about that. Welcome to our interns. We're glad you're here.

WEARING OF PINS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport on a point of order.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that members be permitted to wear pins for the Canadian Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation's Kiss IPF Goodbye campaign.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister seeks unanimous consent to wear pins. Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): At this time, I would ask all members to join me in welcoming our new group of pages for the 41st Parliament. Could you please assemble?

From Mississauga–Streetsville, Adam Holan; from Algoma–Manitoulin, Amelia Spacek; from Kitchener–

Conestoga, Amy Elder; from Ottawa–Orléans, Anna Hiemstra; from Ajax–Pickering, Brendan O'Donnell; from St. Paul's, Cameron Miranda-Radbord; from Beaches–East York, Declan McPherson; from Essex, Gideon Spevak; from Kingston and the Islands, Jack Mason; from Northumberland–Quinte West, Jesse Beirsto; from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, Makayla Bergeron; from Simcoe North, Matthew Maurice; from Whitby–Oshawa, Nicole Vaxvick; from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, Om Patel; from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, Paul Grein; from Scarborough–Guildwood, Ryan Betts; from York West, Sarah Roposa; from Burlington, Simone Flannery; from Windsor West, Sophia Costa; from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Tegan Elliott; from Carleton–Mississippi Mills, Victoria Bailey; and from Kitchener–Waterloo, Zoe Suderman. Welcome.

It is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday the Premier said in the Legislature that "we know full well" that as Ontario sells power to other jurisdictions, "that is a profit to the province of Ontario." That is simply astonishing. It's Liberal math striking again.

So let's pose this question I found on a Liberal math test. If you pay 8.55 cents a kilowatt hour to produce energy in Ontario and you sell that energy for 2.65 cents a kilowatt hour to New York, Minnesota, Manitoba and Quebec, how much profit does that make for Ontario, and what PR spin should the Liberal government use to try to fool the people of Ontario?

It is unacceptable. Will the Premier justify this sale?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The indicators are that my standing doesn't seem to stop people, so I might have to ratchet up right away, and I'll do so.

Premier?

1040

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I know that the Leader of the Opposition would like to take just one moment in time to make his point, but this is a market, and the point I was making yesterday was that overall, when you take into account all of the back and forth—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Okay. That last round indicated that you want me to go, so I'm moving to warnings. If it starts, we'll do it right away.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Overall, there's a net profit to the province of Ontario. That is the point that I was making.

But what I'd like to talk about is the energy system in Ontario and where we have come from. When we came into office, we inherited a badly neglected system. We've made investments in that system and we have upgraded that system.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If I knew who just did that one, they would get warned too.

Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: The Premier said it was just a momentary blip when they had to give away energy—"a moment in time," as the Premier said. Let's talk about more than a moment in time; let's talk about the last three years. In 2013 and 2014, Ontario gave away \$1.2 billion worth of energy. If this government is on pace, it looks like in 2015 it's another \$1.1 billion.

To sum up, this isn't a momentary mistake; this is \$3 billion in three years. It's unbelievable. It is ridiculous to be giving Ontario energy away, giving hydro away, to subsidize our competitors. How can you justify this? This is three years of incompetence.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I suspect that somebody doesn't trust my words. I'm finding it difficult to move to any side when the question is put and people on your own side are making comments while the question is being put. I am still not happy with the fact that I have to do this. If you think that it doesn't mean anything, I might move to naming. I'm making a point, and if you're not getting it, I'll move to the next level.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think the Leader of the Opposition has actually answered his own question. He talked about generating revenue. That's exactly what we do. It is a market, there is a back-and-forth and we generate—

Mr. Steve Clark: I'd like you to answer a few questions.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: And we generate revenues in that market.

But the genesis of these questions is the electricity system. We inherited a neglected system. We have upgraded that system. We have worked to remove billions of dollars of costs by shutting down the coal-fired plants—\$4 billion in costs in terms of health and other costs. We are now working to acknowledge that

there's a cost associated with those upgrades that we have—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: You're making America great again.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean–Carleton is warned.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'll keep going.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: And as the member knows, we have in the throne speech put in place initiatives that will help people with those electricity costs. But we have a clean, reliable grid, which we did not have when we inherited the system that had been broken by the previous government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: No one is buying this Liberal spin that it's all right to give away \$3 billion of hydro to our competitors. As Matt Gurney pointed out in the National Post, these Liberal "contracts require Ontario to buy the green power at a premium price ... only to dump it ... at a loss, into the grids of neighbours, such as New York and Pennsylvania." We are paying huge money for energy in Ontario that we will never use. We are giving energy away, costing the people of Ontario billions of dollars. We need the Premier to stand up for Ontario and stop her part-time job as the minister—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Finance is warned.

Please finish.

Mr. Patrick Brown: It is absolutely absurd that the Premier continues to sign these contracts for energy that we are only going to give away.

Will the Premier show some real leadership? Will she promise to stop signing these contracts for energy we'll never need?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm very happy to rise and answer this question as the Minister of Energy for the first time.

I'm very pleased to be able to stand and reiterate what the Premier has been saying all along. Revenue from electricity exports reduced costs for Ontarians by almost \$230 million in 2015. That's estimated by the province's independent system operator. Electricity trading provides additional grid reliability and helps cover system costs that otherwise would have been paid by Ontario consumers. This actually helps with downward mitigation on rates.

The electricity system is planned to meet peak demand, which can from time to time—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please. Wrap up.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: From time to time, it will actually lead to excessive supply during unexpectedly low demand periods. What we do to ensure—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: —we keep the downward rates going, not like what they did and leave a crumbling system.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock.

Be seated, please.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. The scandal, waste and mismanagement by this government are astounding. Billions and billions wasted, all paid for by the people of Ontario. And now, again, I say this HST rebate is too little, too late.

It's too little for Lindsay. She's a mom from Sault Ste. Marie. Lindsay and her four children are forced to sacrifice food just to keep the lights on in their home. They've had as little as \$200 a month to spend on food for their entire family.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier tell Lindsay and her kids what this 8% rebate will do to help their family keep the lights on, when another increase is coming on November 1?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think I have said many times that we recognize that there are people in the province who are struggling to pay their electricity bills. We have made changes in the past. We have put in place the Ontario energy support program and we've put in place property tax credits. We recognize that there needs to be more done. That's exactly why—exactly why—we've put the initiatives that we did in the throne speech.

As I said, we inherited a degraded electricity system, Mr. Speaker, a dirty, unreliable grid. There have been no brownouts or blackouts this summer, despite record temperatures. There have been no brownouts and blackouts, and no smog days because of the shutdown of the coal plants.

We've made investments. We recognize that there are costs associated with that and that's why we're working to help people who are struggling with their electricity bill.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: This band-aid solution is also too late for Matt from Peterborough. I was watching Global News, and hopefully the Premier had a chance to watch their story on Hydro Horror Stories. Matt is a Canadian Forces veteran. Matt's hydro bills have been \$1,000. His hydro was cut off on Remembrance Day, while he was at a service. Despite the fact the banks were closed, he managed to pay the bill that day. But his power wasn't turned back on for two days. No one deserves that treatment, let alone a veteran on Remembrance Day. And it's not just Matt. There are 567,000 Ontarians who were in arrears at the end of 2015 because of the hydro crisis.

Will the Premier stop turning her back on Matt and the 560,000 families in Ontario who can't pay their hydro bill?

1050

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know that local distribution companies work with consumers who are in distress. I don't know the full story, but I am quite sure that in Peterborough, there would be support, and I hope that they were able to support this gentleman.

But again, the Leader of the Opposition somehow doesn't believe that I understand that people are struggling. That's exactly why we put the initiatives in place. I haven't actually heard a suggestion from him about what he would do. All we know is that he believes—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: All we know is that he doesn't support the phase-out of coal, he doesn't support green energy and he knows that people are struggling. Well, so do we. That's why we've taken action.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Boy, Mr. Speaker, if the Premier wants to know what we would do differently, we would stop signing contracts where we give away \$3 billion. We would stop the fire sale of Hydro One.

Maybe the Premier needs to hear another story, because she's not appreciating that people in Ontario are in pain. Let me tell you the story of Kip Van Kempen.

Kip had his Hydro One disconnected, and they were unable to repair the line because of red tape and logistical issues. So you cut the hydro of Kip Van Kempen's family. Then they got a bill for having no hydro. They had to pay hundreds of dollars for getting no hydro. No power is being delivered. They can't get their line repaired. That's hydro services in Ontario under this Liberal government.

My question to the Premier is, is this acceptable? Is it acceptable to charge Ontarians huge, astonishing bills for receiving no hydro?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It is unacceptable that people would have to face those kinds of challenges. Again, I don't know the specifics of the situations and I don't know what the interaction with the local distribution company was. My hope would be that they would be able to work with Hydro One.

One of the benefits of the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One is that it is a more professionally run company. It's a better company than it was and it will continue to improve. That was one of the motivations behind the changes that we're making.

I recognize that there are people in the province who need support around their electricity costs. I recognize that there are people who need support in their lives on a day-to-day basis. This morning, I was at Central

Technical School in Toronto and we were talking about the Ontario Student Grant—so that young people who want to go to post-secondary from low- and middle-income families will have free tuition—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
New question.

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. People want to believe in Ontario, but they're losing hope. Creating a bright future is going to take action in this province and it's going to take action now. Monday's throne speech, sadly, was a missed opportunity. Instead of action, Ontarians got yet more disappointed by this Premier and her government.

People deserve opportunities for better jobs, a life that they can afford and services that they can count on. Why won't this government start focusing on the priorities that matter to the people of this province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, our plan is 100% about growing the economy and creating jobs so that people can have access to those resources that they need so that we, as a government, can reinvest in the people in this province.

Ontario is one of the leading jurisdictions in the country in terms of economic growth. In the last two years, there was 6% growth. We're projecting 2.5% and 3% growth over the next couple of years. Our unemployment rate is below the national average. Since I've been the Premier, we have been part of creating 200,000 jobs in this province.

The success story that we're seeing right now is because of the investments that we've put in place. It's because of the plan that we have been implementing. We're on track to balance the budget, and what that means is that we are able to make investments and help people in their lives every single day, including—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: People across Ontario say that privatizing Hydro One is something that they expected the Conservatives to do. They expected that to come from a Conservative government, Speaker. It's not what they hoped for from this Premier.

On Monday, the government said it was “dedicated to reducing electricity costs....” That means stopping the privatization of Hydro One, plain and simple. Will the Premier do the right thing and stop any further privatization of Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I said, the plan that we have put in place is working. We are seeing the results of the investments that we are making.

Mr. Speaker, I have acknowledged many times that we have had to make difficult choices. We've had to make difficult decisions in terms of making the investments that are necessary. But unlike the ideological position that the leader of the third party is holding on this, we understand that in order to be able to invest in transporta-

tion infrastructure in this province, we need the funding. To be able to do that, we need those resources, and so we are making those investments. We are taking an asset that has been owned by the people of Ontario and continuing to control and regulate that, but recycling that asset so that we can make the investments that we know people need, so that the transit, the roads, the bridges—that they have those in place now so that their economies can thrive and so that they can have the future that they deserve.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, I didn't realize that 80% of the people of Ontario share my ideology. That's fantastic.

In fact, what 80% of the people have is a shared value. That value is the value of having Hydro One as a public asset that operates in the public interest. It's about knowing what your values are and sticking to them. That's what it's about.

On Tuesday morning, the Premier was asked how long Ontarians can count on her new rebate for hydro. She said that this is a change that they're making permanently. But then on Tuesday afternoon, the Minister of Finance was asked the same question, and he wouldn't give an answer. That actually doesn't really give us very much confidence and doesn't give the people of this province very much confidence.

So the question is this: Why doesn't this Premier just clear things up and actually take the HST off the hydro bills once and for all?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: On the one hand, the leader of the third party wants to move quickly, and on the other hand, the process she puts forward would take months and months and months to accomplish.

We're bringing in legislation that will do exactly the same thing. It will take the provincial portion of the HST off of people's bills. I would hope that the leader of the third party and her team would not stand in the way of that legislation, but would work with us to get that legislation passed so that we can, on January 1, 2017, make sure that the provincial portion of the HST is taken off of people's electricity bills.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier, but I suggest she just call a friend. If she's so worried about the timing, she can call her friend in Ottawa and get that change made lickety-split for the people of Ontario.

People see that life is becoming much more unaffordable. Instead of permanently taking the HST off hydro, the government is proposing a temporary rebate that people cannot count on.

The government is promising child care spaces, but as parents and experts are saying, the problem is that there is nothing there to make child care more affordable for families.

Whether it's soaring hydro bills or whether it's unaffordable child care, young families are at a tipping point in this province. Why won't this government take action now to make life more affordable?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The changes on the electricity bills vis-à-vis the provincial portion of the HST are permanent. We are bringing in legislation. We have said quite clearly that this is a permanent change, and no matter the spin that the leader of the third party wants to put on it, we are making this a permanent change.

1100

In terms of the 100,000 licensed child care spaces, we understand that along with those child care spaces, there have to be subsidy dollars. There has to be a way of funding those, and that is part of the plan to put those 100,000 child care spaces in place. We recognize that those zero-to-four years are incredibly important, and at this point, only about 20% of families have access to licensed child care. That's why we are going to put 100,000 more spaces in place over five years, starting next year, including the resources so that there will be subsidies available.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, unfortunately those subsidies are going to go to the private sector, because that's who's providing child care in this province under the Liberals' watch, instead of not-for-profits and the public sector. It's a shameful situation.

In 2018, people in Alberta are going to be paid a minimum wage of \$15 an hour, while Ontario's minimum wage is going to be about \$11.71. People in Ontario need good jobs with decent wages, but the minimum wage was not even mentioned in the throne speech.

Albertans can count on their NDP government to take action. Why can't Ontarians count on their Liberal government to take action?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We've moved to put in place a very objective and transparent process around the minimum wage. I know that other provinces are working to catch up and to phase in increases in minimum wage, but we're leading the country. I'm very, very proud of the process that we went through, bringing in people from the business community, from poverty activism, from across the spectrum to give us advice on how to take the issue of minimum wage out of the hands of politics and put it into an objective measure. So that's what we've done.

But let's talk about what we are doing as a government to help people in their lives every day. We're making average college tuition and university tuition free for students with financial needs. We're expanding access to the low-income seniors' drug benefit—30,000 more seniors every year will have access to the drug benefit.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: At the Liberal rate, it will be close to 2030—or later—before \$15 is the minimum wage in the province of Ontario. The Premier says that

the Liberals here in Ontario are leading the country. I hope she's listening to what she's saying, because everybody knows that that is definitely not the case when it comes to the minimum wage.

People actually want to build a good life in this province, and they should be able to. They want the next generation to have a great future here in Ontario, but it is getting harder, and people are losing hope. If Ontario stays on this path—the path in the throne speech, the Liberal path—it is only going to get tougher and tougher for people.

This is the time for action. Why doesn't this government get it?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think if you look at the economic situation that Ontario is in right now, compared to three years ago, four years ago, economic growth has increased.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Look at Alberta. They can do it and you can't.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: You know what, Mr. Speaker? The member opposite says to look at Alberta. Actually, Alberta is struggling, and we feel a lot of compassion for the situation that Alberta is in right now. But what we know is that Ontario is leading in terms of economic growth in the country. We're leading in terms of unemployment rate. We're below the national average, and that is because we have made some very strategic decisions about investments: for example, putting in an extra \$250 million over two years to help 150,000 young Ontarians develop skills and have a work experience. That is the kind of decision that allows businesses to have talented, skilled young people, and that's the kind of decision that's fuelling our economy.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Todd Smith: My question this morning is for the Premier. The Premier is being sued again, this time by CUPE. At this point, there are so many investigations and depositions that you actually need to buy a program to keep track of them all.

So why is the government being sued by CUPE today? Because, the lawsuit alleges, they crossed an ethical line when they tried to use the Hydro One sale to raise money from the big banks who sold it off.

Speaker, will the Premier reprimand these ministers for crossing an ethical line, or will she admit that they were acting on her own orders when they used the very unpopular Hydro One sale to bankroll for the Liberal Party of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm very happy to rise to answer the member's question. I think it's important to recognize that now that there's a legal process under way, we're going to let that process unfold. We can't comment on that directly, but what we can comment on is that the Integrity Commissioner has already looked into this and recently confirmed that there was no wrongdoing.

What we're going to do now as a government, Mr. Speaker, is focus on building Ontario up and helping people in their everyday lives. Broadening the ownership of Hydro One is a crucial part of that plan. Just these past few weeks, I've been going through Ontario, making announcements: in Kapuskasing, of over \$2 million for infrastructure; in North Bay, of over \$5 million for infrastructure. That's great news for the people of Ontario. These new infrastructure projects will lead to new jobs, new investments and more economic activity for this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Todd Smith: We had such high hopes for the new minister, but it looks like he's gone from drinking a jug full of orange Kool-Aid to the red.

This government, Mr. Speaker—they fight with the doctors and they get sued. They fight with the teachers and they get sued. They sell Hydro One and they get sued. Cancelling gas plants, offering appointments in Sudbury and turning the province's air ambulance into a mess all got them investigated by the OPP—five OPP investigations. At this point I think part of the deficit is just going to go to pay the legal bills for cabinet ministers.

My question for the Premier is a simple one: Why does it always take a deposition or a police investigation for us to get the truth? If this is the most transparent government, as the Premier always claims, why do they only provide information after they get a court order?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Once again, it's always an honour for me to be able to rise and answer the honourable member's question. As I mentioned earlier, because there's now a legal process, I'm not able to talk about that, but what I can talk about are more of the great things that are happening with the broadening and the sale of Hydro One. We're on track to realize our budget target of approximately \$9 billion generated through the IPO: \$4 billion for infrastructure investment and \$5 billion for debt repayment. This is allowing us, Mr. Speaker, to make investments without corresponding increases in debt, deficits or cuts to other programs and services. We still own 70% of Hydro One shares and have generated a large portion of our target revenue. With 30% more shares to offer, we are on track to ensure the best possible value for the people of Ontario.

MINIMUM WAGE

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, I asked the Premier if she would stand up and commit to a \$15-an-hour minimum wage. Incredibly, in his response, the Minister of Labour said, "Ontario is leading the way when it comes to the minimum wage...." Wait a second here: It was yesterday that the government

of Alberta was leading the way by announcing that it was bringing in a \$15-an-hour minimum wage in 2018.

My question is very simple: Will the Premier follow Alberta's lead and increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It gives me great pleasure to answer that question because I think it really gives us an opportunity to illustrate how Ontario has led the way in this regard. Certainly, it was unpredictable in the past. Business couldn't rely on it. There was no stability. Those people who were earning the minimum wage didn't know if they were going to get an increase from one year to the next. In fact, between 1996 and 2003 there were no increases to the minimum wage for that period of time. We brought in a system that's predictable, that's fair—and, yes, Speaker, we are leading the way when it comes to a system that's predictable, that's fair.

Other provinces are looking to Ontario as an example of how you can bring in a system that allows for predictable increases, allows for those increases to take place and yet allows for business to have the stability that it needs. It's an excellent system. It's up for review. In two and three years, we'll be taking another look at it. So while other jurisdictions have said they may do something someday soon, we've done it.

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: One in 10 Ontarians earn the minimum wage, and that's overwhelmingly young people, women and new Ontarians. Whether they're in Brampton, Scarborough, Hamilton, Toronto or Windsor-Essex, we've listened to them. It's not enough. They were left out of the speech from the throne.

Will the Premier commit to raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Ontario has one of the highest minimum wages of any province in this country. It's \$11.25 today. As of October 1 this year, it will be increasing again to \$11.40. It increases on a rotating, predictable basis.

Now, we went out and got advice. We asked everybody in the province who had an interest in this. Remember that word, Speaker, "interest." We had poverty advocates come forward. We had employers come forward. Trade unions came forward. Organized labour came forward. The NDP made not one submission to that panel. When we were talking to people about the minimum wage, the NDP made not one submission.

Now, Speaker, we get the crocodile tears as to "We need a better system." Where were you when we needed you? Where were you when we needed the advice?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Start the clock. New question?

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Mr. Han Dong: My question is to the President of the Treasury Board Secretariat. I know that public access to data is a key aspect of fostering an accountable and trustworthy government, as well as a means for local problem-solvers to develop new and innovative ways for Ontarians to navigate information. Time and time again, I am amazed by the cutting-edge technology developed by start-ups within and around my riding of Trinity–Spadina, many of whom use the data that is freely provided by our government.

One such example of an information technology leader that utilizes government open data is the real estate service, MapYourProperty. MapYourProperty is an all-in-one platform that streamlines development planning in Toronto and York region for urban planners, developers and engineers.

Can the President of the Treasury Board Secretariat tell the members of this House how our government continues to make information open, transparent and easily accessible—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Mr. Han Dong: —and how companies like MapYourProperty—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I stand, you sit. President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Thank you to the member from Trinity–Spadina for his great question.

We continue to go to great lengths to open Ontario's data. As of today, we have publicly released over 500 datasets and are in the process of developing a catalogue which publicly discloses all of the datasets Ontario actively maintains. This data helps to power one of Ontario's most rapidly growing sectors, the interactive digital media, or IDM sector. In fact, the Entertainment Software Association of Canada reports that the IDM sector contributes \$3 billion annually across Canada and has grown by 31% since 2013.

We believe that by opening up government data, we make decision-making more transparent to everyday Ontarians and have provided IDM companies the opportunity—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Han Dong: I want to thank the minister for the answer. It's always encouraging to see how creating a transparent government has led to a more competitive Ontario.

As the follow-up question, I would like to ask the minister how our government is continuing to open up information and use input from Ontarians to shape decision-making. Our government has a strong record when it comes to making Ontario a more open and transparent province.

We post ministers' mandate letters outlining priorities online, and we release reports on their progress which detail how we have delivered on these priorities, with the most recent in January. We have also increased transpar-

ency for government agencies by requiring expense and governance documents to be publicly accessible. This past year, we unveiled a new platform of public participation, resulting in over 53,000 Ontarians voting on 1,700 budget ideas.

Minister, how is our government continuing to engage Ontarians in a dialogue to make our province more open?

Hon. Liz Sandals: The member has highlighted our record on transparency and openness. I'm proud to say that Ontario is an international—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's never too late to get warned.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Ontario is an international leader when it comes to making information free and accessible. In fact, Ontario was selected as one of 15 subnational governments from all around the world to join the Open Government Partnership—the only jurisdiction in Canada to be selected. Using that as a launch pad, our next step towards opening up government will entail new commitments co-created with Ontarians.

In August, we invited the public to submit their ideas to help our government become the most digitally connected government in Canada. Final commitments will be chosen at a public workshop coming up soon.

FUNDRAISING

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is for the Premier. We hear that the Liberals will be banning MPPs from attending fundraising events, but we know their cash-for-access scheme continues, with some new twists and turns. I understand that recently there was a high-powered, big-money Liberal fundraiser, but this time no ministers were there. Instead, they had their proxies: Andrew Bevan, the Premier's chief of staff; Andrew Teliszewsky, chief of staff to the Minister of Energy; and senior energy adviser Matt Whittington were all there. Apparently, employees of the public service are now tasked to be the Liberal Party bagmen and intermediaries to enrich the Liberal Party and exchange influences.

Speaker, they refuse to stop even after being caught red-handed, even after being shamed into action by the media. They just cannot—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is warned, and the Minister of Economic Development and Growth is warned.

Finish your question, please.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Will the Premier stop doing through the back door what she says is inappropriate to do through the front door?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Attorney General.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I thank the member for the question. We on this side of the House are very proud of

the bill that we tabled, Bill 201, now Bill 2, which really changes the way fundraising will be done in the province of Ontario. Speaker, as you know, we did a very rare thing, which was to take the bill for public consultations right after first reading, something that, at least in my time here at this Legislature, has never been done. I really want to take this opportunity to thank all members of the standing committee who worked throughout the summer by travelling the province, listening to Ontarians and experts, people like the Chief Electoral Officer and other experts, making a remarkable impact on further improving that piece of legislation. I'll talk a little more about the legislation in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Again to the Premier, not her proxy: The entire process they put together on election financing has been disingenuous from the start. Introducing legislation—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member will withdraw.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I withdraw.

Introducing legislation and amendments through press releases completely alters and distorts how our democracy must operate. They continue with their cash-for-access activities. It's clear that this government's priorities start and end with only themselves.

We know that Bill 201, now Bill 2, along with the committee process, has been dishonest. It's been nothing but a—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to ask you to withdraw.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Carry on.

1120

Mr. Randy Hillier: It's only been a sleight of hand—oily and slippery hands. Bill 2 ought to be renamed "the lubricious act to create Liberal Party bagmen and proxies."

Speaker, will the Premier wash her dirty hands of this—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Order.

Start the clock.

While I have everyone's attention, the member will withdraw.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Attorney General?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, on this side of the House, we're very proud to bring forward a bill that is going to make sure that we ban corporate and union donations in our province, that we're going to put much lower limits on how fundraising is done, not to mention regulate third-party advertising as well.

It is this Premier and this government that are not engaging in stakeholder-specific fundraisers, whereas the

opposition party continues to do so. They are holding all those fundraisers and are meeting with stakeholders. In fact, they're also advertising positions for fundraisers, who will then convert private members' bills into fundraising activities. So I would urge the member opposite to be careful in the allegations he makes in this House.

We look forward to working with the opposition parties in making sure that Bill 2 is a strong piece of legislation so that we really change the way fundraising is done in the province of Ontario.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Premier. Schools across the province are crumbling and they have reached a tipping point. There is a \$15-billion repair backlog—\$3.4 billion in Toronto alone. Students and education workers have been in sweltering-hot classrooms and will have to wear winter jackets in the classroom in the winter.

To make matters worse, Ontario's teachers are being forced to load French and music lessons onto carts and transport them from classroom to classroom because of Liberal cuts to education.

Interjection.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: The Premier can shake her head all she wants, but even the boards are speaking out.

Will the Premier admit that her misplaced priorities are forcing our young people to pay the price?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I was only shaking my head because it is the reality that core French teachers and music teachers for many, many years in this province—itinerant music teachers—have not necessarily had a dedicated classroom. It has worked very, very well that teachers have moved from classroom to classroom. Certainly, my three children who went through the publicly funded education system in Toronto had exactly that situation, and it's not unusual.

I think sometimes what happens is that when there has been a school where there has been a dedicated classroom, and then enrolment may go up or there may be a change, and then that changes so that the core French teacher is moving from classroom to classroom, that can cause an adjustment in the school. But it's not an unusual practice, and the kids get very, very good education in that way.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Back to the Premier: Premier, there are classrooms that are being closed and the teachers are being moved out of those classrooms. If you think it's working, maybe you should actually talk to the education workers delivering the curriculum.

Recently, a school in Thames Valley had to close because of health concerns related to a lack of air conditioning. Our schools are in crisis. A teacher in Toronto was forced to spend \$500 of her own money to install an air conditioner in her classroom because students were feeling faint and lethargic and she felt the environment

was unsafe. Our children should not be trying to learn in classrooms without windows—I'm sure the Premier has windows in her office. They should not be in classrooms with poor air quality.

Will the Premier immediately ensure that the repair backlog for schools across the province is remedied? And I'm talking about \$15 billion.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge that there needed to be an increase in funding in terms of the repair and renewal of schools. We added a historic \$1.1 billion on top of an existing \$1.6 billion. We have acknowledged that there is a need to continue to fund the renewal of schools. We will continue to work with school boards. The \$1.1 billion that we put in on top of the \$1.6 billion is funding projects around the province—it did over the summer and continues to.

School boards make the decisions about how they use those funds. School boards have priorities. They take those funds and they apply them to the priorities.

We understand that there's a need, Mr. Speaker, and that's why we put in over a billion dollars on top of the billion dollars that was already there.

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE POLICY

Ms. Daiene Vernile: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Let me start by offering her my congratulations on her recent appointment to cabinet. She is a tireless worker in our caucus and we're pleased to see her taking on new responsibilities.

Ontario has been a destination for people fleeing war, famine, persecution and other tragic circumstances. They come here, as my family did, to build a new life for themselves and their families.

As of early August, Ontario has received over 12,000 refugees from the Syrian conflict, and Kitchener-Waterloo has welcomed 1,200 of those refugees. During the 2016 Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference, the minister met with Kitchener mayor Berry Vrbanovic and Waterloo mayor Dave Jaworsky to talk about settlement services.

Could the minister please tell us how the province is committed to supporting local municipalities that are settling Syrian newcomers?

Hon. Laura Albanese: I want to thank, first of all, the member from Kitchener Centre for this valuable question.

Our government has partnered with the federal government to support the resettlement of thousands of refugees who fled the Syrian conflict during the past year.

During the most recent Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference, I did meet with the mayors of Kitchener and Waterloo, who asked for reassurance that the province would continue to support local settlement services within their municipalities during the integration process of the refugees. Helping refugees, Mr. Speaker, is not only the compassionate thing to do; it's the right thing to do.

I would like to thank all municipalities, private sponsors and volunteers for helping refugees feel safe, welcomed and supported in our communities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I want to thank the minister for her response, Mr. Speaker. It's very encouraging to see that our government is doing everything it can to ensure that refugees can settle and integrate into our communities with success.

In my riding, many of the constituents rely on the programs and services provided by local settlement agencies. It's very important to my constituents and to all Ontarians that these programs and services are safeguarded.

I'm sure that the minister would agree that the work of the local settlement agencies and integration services in communities is critical to this process, and I can tell you that the settlement agencies in Waterloo region have done an excellent job.

Speaker, could the minister please tell us how the government of Ontario is enhancing support for local settlement agencies so that they can continue the very important work that they are performing?

Hon. Laura Albanese: Once again, thank you to my friend and colleague the member from Kitchener Centre for her question.

I also want to say that last August 25, our ministry did announce funding of \$3.8 million to enhance 26 settlement agencies and integration services within the 12 cities and towns across the province that welcomed the majority of Syrian newcomers.

I thank all settlement agencies for their crucial work, as they have been at the forefront of the largest refugee movement in Canada in a generation.

The member will be pleased to know that one of these agencies is the Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre. The centre will be receiving up to \$165,000. The funding announced last month will support local settlement programs and integration services; support programs for refugee women and youth; and provide training on refugee mental health for front-line settlement workers and school-based summer programming for students.

1130

HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Premier. I can remember this Premier committing that her government would be accountable and transparent and open.

Applause.

Mr. Michael Harris: But after five OPP investigations—you may not want to clap there for that one—we know that she is not accountable, and this summer provided more evidence that she's not open, or transparent either.

After a decade of study, consultations and planning for the GTA West highway that many are depending on, her government slammed on the brakes last December. Now they've gone a step further, closing the doors and leaving

the decision-making to an unnamed secret panel nobody's heard of because her minister refuses to tell us who they are. It's neither transparent nor accountable.

Will the Premier report what happened to her commitment to transparency and tell those left in the dark just who she's designated to determine the future of their highway?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member opposite for the question today. This is an issue, obviously, that we have been dealing with at the ministry specifically over the last number of months, as that member would know.

Last December, as I've said in the past, we hit the pause button with respect to the environmental assessment work that has been undertaken for this project. I said at the time and I'll repeat here today, that, of course, is because over the last more-than-10 years since this project started as a conceptual highway through this particular part of the GTHA, the world of transportation has been changing dramatically.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: You still froze the lands for 10 years.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: One of the member opposite's colleagues makes a point about frozen lands. The other commitment that I made at the time to municipalities, landowners, the private sector and all those who participated in the process since day one was that we would move through, via an internal working group working closely with the ministry on this process, as quickly as we could, and the report, when finalized, will be made public.

I'm happy to provide more information in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: Area municipal councils have passed motions calling on this government for answers on the highway's future. Residents and motorists are also looking for direction. Her minister is moving this process behind closed doors.

When I made a very basic request to the minister's office in August, following the panel's announcement, I was told, "The panel members will remain unnamed." Speaker, this is a public project involving billions of public dollars. Continued secrecy only fuels further questions: Who selected them and why, and have they ever paid for access to the minister? A fair question.

Will the Premier end the speculation and simply provide the names of her minister's secret GTA West panel?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: As I said in the initial answer to the member on this particular question—and I do understand where the municipalities are coming from. Virtually every municipality in the affected area has had the chance to speak with me about this particular issue. I made an ironclad commitment about the fact that we will not only provide them with the opportunity for additional

consultation, but we will try to clarify what's taking place with this just as soon as we possibly can.

I understand the importance. I will tell people here that this is a part of the GTHA which includes the community that I'm proud to represent, so I get how important this work is. As I said in my initial answer, when the report is completed, it will be made public.

I'll close off by saying, though I do have respect for that member who has asked the question today, given the history of the Conservative Party and highways in this province with the sale of the 407, I will not take advice from that member or from that party when it comes to highways in the GTHA.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please.

New question.

DISASTER RELIEF

SECOURS AUX SINISTRÉS

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre de l'Environnement et de changement climatique.

It has been 18 months since a CN train derailed, caught fire, exploded and spilled a million litres of crude oil in the Makami River in Gogama. CN spent all of last summer and fall trying to remove the oil from the water until the river froze over. Come this spring, it became obvious to everyone but this minister that there is still a lot of oil in the water.

The people of Mattagami First Nation and Gogama were promised that their natural environment would be brought back to what it was like before the derailment.

When is this minister going to order CN to get back to work and remove all of the oil from the water and soil?

L'hon. Glen R. Murray: Merci pour la question. Notre département, nos officiels, continue de travailler avec le centre de santé publique à Sudbury, qui est une équipe avec le gouvernement fédéral et l'équipe du CN. Ils continuent de faire des études de la qualité de l'eau et des conditions dans les rivières et dans les lacs. Ils continuent de découvrir les sources de pollution des huiles dans l'eau.

The work is continuing. There is a newsletter that went out, which we shared, that was three pages long and introduced about 25 different measures that either we, CN or the health department—I share the concern. There has been the discovery of more oil in some of the sediment. That work is being done to remediate that. I'm happy to continue to work with the member and get her a briefing on what the next steps are in cleaning it up.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It makes no sense. All that's going on in Gogama is that they are monitoring. But it doesn't matter how much oil we find; what's the next step? We monitor some more.

All the government has to do is to order CN to come back and continue the cleanup. It doesn't cost the govern-

ment a penny. It is CN who pays for it. We were promised clean water. The water is not clean. We can see oil. We can smell oil. We can see dead fish everywhere. The environment was not like that before. It was beautiful.

Why isn't the minister doing anything? I know that the people of Mattagami and Gogama will never make the donations to the Liberals that CN is making, but they deserve a government who looks after their interests. They deserve a government who cares about the environment like they do. Why don't they order CN to clean it up before the water freezes over? You know what, Speaker? Water is life.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Minister?

L'hon. Glen R. Murray: Mes chers amis, notre réputation est très importante. Je te respecte. Je vous respecte. Je n'ai pas reçu de—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Through the Chair, please.

L'hon. Glen R. Murray: —ou des choses comme ça. J'espère que vous me respectez aussi.

Let me just read from the newsletter about what is happening and what CN is doing just as recently as only a couple weeks ago. On August 26, CN's consultant completed a survey of the Makami River and the Minisinakwa Lake with the Gogama fire chief and a member of the Mattagami First Nation to identify all the areas where residents feel or have identified that contaminants remain. They're working now on an action plan with the community and the First Nation.

Starting on August 29, CN's consultants have been undertaking additional sediment benthic monitoring. I can go on, Mr. Speaker. There are about 20 things going on with removal of sediment.

Interjections.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: The Leader of the Opposition seems to have all the answers so I guess I don't need to answer the question.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: It's nice to be back with everybody.

My question is for the Minister of Transportation. We know that we all have a role to play in the fight against climate change, and at the same time we also know that Ontarians need to get from point A to point B, from school, to work, to shopping or wherever they need to go with their families, safely and efficiently. That's why it's important for our government to help Ontarians achieve both of these goals through investments in environmentally friendly transportation options.

One option that's growing in popularity among Ontarians, and certainly among residents in my community of Etobicoke-Lakeshore, is electric vehicles. You see it on the streets. I see those green plates in various locations, and those people want to know whether the minister can

advise members of this House on what the government is doing to help Ontarians go green and purchase their own electric vehicle.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Of course I want to begin by thanking the member from Etobicoke-Lakeshore not only for his question today but for being an extraordinarily hard-working member here in this Legislature for the people of his community.

I will also say that I know, speaking for myself, that I was really delighted to be in Etobicoke-Lakeshore a number of months ago to announce additional details with respect to some of the incentives that we're providing around the charging infrastructure related to electric vehicles. I want to thank that member for hosting us that particular day.

With electric drive week upon us, it is the perfect opportunity to take a moment and reflect on our government's commitment to expanding access to electric driving options across the province. Our government's Electric Vehicle Incentive Program is helping more Ontarians make the crucial move to electric vehicles.

In February, we also modernized the program to make purchasing an electric vehicle even more affordable. Our plan is working. There are over 7,000 electric vehicles on Ontario's roads. And as the member has stated, we all have a role to play with respect to fighting climate change.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: Thank you to the minister for that response. It's clear that electric vehicles play a key role in achieving our commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

An investment in electric vehicles only means so much if Ontarians are not only able to charge their vehicles to get where they need to go, but know that there are more facilities where they're going. Ontarians want to know that owning an electric vehicle is not only a green choice but a practical choice as well.

As the minister stated, I was very proud to host the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change in Etobicoke-Lakeshore for an important announcement about the expansion of electric charging facilities across the province. Can the minister please provide more information to members of the House on what our government announced in Etobicoke-Lakeshore this past July?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to thank the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore for his remarkable leadership in his community on electrification, and the Minister of Transportation. But I just want to go back: What we announced was EV charging in a partnership with Ikea and other retailers that is putting Ontario in a leadership role.

I want to go back to the answer that the Premier had earlier. What are we going to do about overnight electricity, and how are we going to make life more affordable for Ontarians? That overnight energy is about to become

very low-cost and, in many cases, free fuel for their cars. We have a plan that overnight energy is going to be funding batteries and making heating and cooling homes much less expensive. The Minister of Energy and I and the long-term energy plan and the climate action plan are coming together to cut costs and reduce GHGs.

They have no plan across the aisle, Mr. Speaker. We actually have two.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no deferred votes; therefore, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1143 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF ONTARIO

Mr. Bill Walker: I rise on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus to recognize our medical and health professionals as they celebrate the 150th anniversary of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.

Since its founding in 1866, the CPSO has been ensuring that Ontarians are served by some of the best doctors in the world who have made great medical breakthroughs, all in an effort to save human lives. Let's remind ourselves of some of that amazing progress:

- 30 years added to the average lifespan and a 90% drop in the infant death rate;

- public immunization and eradication of diseases that both killed millions and left millions more paralyzed;

- the discovery of insulin and diabetes treatment; and

- the ability to transplant bone marrow, a lung or a heart and even to resuscitate one that stopped.

When we consider these remarkable achievements, we are reminded they are possible because of our dedicated professionals and the strong institutions and regulatory bodies like the CPSO.

When the college was established, there were about 1.5 million residents in Ontario. They were served by about 1,770 doctors. Today, there are 13.5 million Ontarians and 35,000 doctors licensed by the college.

Initially, the CPSO had only two women licensed to practise: Jennie Trout in 1875 and Emily Stowe in 1880. By 2000, women made up over 30% of the physician population, and this number continues to increase every year. From Dr. Trout and Dr. Stowe to Dr. Frederick Banting, CPSO members have a strong track record of achieving what once seemed improbable and now imminently possible.

Some of them were also war heroes. While the war years claimed the lives of 50 CPSO-registered doctors, including John McCrae, also known for his poem *In Flanders Fields*, and front-line surgeon Dr. Norman Bethune, their courage and legacy lives on.

In 1992, the CPSO became the first in Canada to ban its doctors from performing female circumcision. It also adopted a zero tolerance policy towards sexual abuse.

Challenging as some of these changes may be, we're confident that the CPSO will continue to be a thriving organization that plays a key role in Ontario's health system. With that, we ought to stay confident that with a strong regulatory body such as the CPSO and its dedicated medical and health professionals we will continue to conquer many more battles, like cancer, and save lives.

Congratulations on all of your achievements and thank you.

SARAH LEWIS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I want to brag a little bit this afternoon about an amazing young teenager from Windsor. Her name is Sarah Lewis. She's 15 years old.

She and some other classmates recently toured some war cemeteries in Italy. Earlier this month, she hosted a presentation on her travels and gave a brief history of the Canadian involvement in the Italian campaign. She did this at a Legion hall and invited Windsor veterans, their families and supporters.

I was there with my friends Larry Costello and Ralph Mayville. Both are vets; both are in their nineties. They were very impressed with her presentation, as was I, and it's no wonder. Sarah started her community outreach on her seventh birthday.

Instead of presents, she wanted warm socks for the homeless. Since then, she has collected more than \$60,000 for the needy. She has delivered 22,000 pairs of socks, as well as hats, mittens, gloves, sleeping bags, backpacks, food and toiletry items.

At 15, Sarah Lewis exemplifies all that is good in the young people of today. She cares for the less fortunate. She recognizes the sacrifices paid by our aging veterans. She respects their contributions, and she wants more of us to do the same. For that, I say she well deserves a salute from all of us here in the Ontario Legislature.

COMMUNITY BARBECUE

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I'm happy to rise today and talk about a great summer tradition that recently took place in the riding of Scarborough Southwest. On August 27, I hosted my annual community barbecue at the West Scarborough Neighbourhood Community Centre.

This was truly a great highlight of my summer, an opportunity to get outside, enjoy some beautiful summer weather and spend time with residents from across my riding in a fun, casual setting.

The best part was that it was fun for the whole family. In addition to the burgers, pizza, and other refreshments, we had face painting, balloon animals and a clown who spent the afternoon entertaining everyone who made it out, both young and old. We had a great turnout and I'm very happy about that.

Another highlight of the day was a raffle draw where we had passes for the Exhibition and the Ontario Science Centre, and gift certificates for local restaurants. It was a really great way to end the summer.

I'd like to thank everybody who came out to make the barbecue such a success. I'd especially like to give special mention to everyone at West Scarborough Neighbourhood Community Centre for being such great hosts and for allowing us to have access to their facility, and also to the vendors, the entertainers and volunteers who donated their time and talents to really make this a special day for the Scarborough Southwest community. We had a tremendous amount of volunteers who came out and helped, and I really appreciated that because they weren't paid; they came out and helped out with the special event.

For that, Mr. Speaker, I want to say thank you, and I'll see you next year with the same statement.

HERITAGE RAILWAY AND CAROUSEL

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Patty and I attended the annual appreciation day for the 130 carousel and mini-train volunteers. This is a letter that was read that night which really encapsulates this unique attraction.

"I'm writing to thank you for the wonderful work you and your volunteers do!

"My family and I have spent the last six weeks in North Bay while I am working here temporarily as a pediatrician.

"Riding the train and carousels has certainly been a highlight of our time in North Bay!

"We have been there at least once a week ... and sometimes two or three times!

"Our two-year-old son's eyes light up when he sees the train coming and he delights in riding it."

"At home, he has been taking his used tickets around while wearing his 'train conductor hat.'

"He calls 'All aboard!' and then lets his toys ride a railway of his own invention.

"He also loved riding the carousel—from picking out a horse to the ride itself."

He ends the letter to our volunteers by saying, "Thank you for the delight you have brought our child!

"We really appreciate the efforts of your volunteers to provide these experiences to young children (and their parents!).

"You provide a wonderful service to your community."

Speaker, we couldn't have said it any better. To the 130 men and women who come out all spring, summer and fall long and take care of these kids, we say thank you.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Miss Monique Taylor: When the government announced changes to the autism program last spring, families all across Ontario were thrown into turmoil. The Liberal government insisted that the changes were based on scientific research. Families were forced to fight tirelessly to get this government to understand that their actions were wrong-headed and were not backed up by the facts.

Today we learned that the government's own expert panel wrote to the minister just three weeks after the changes were announced to denounce those changes. They said the government's plan "is not in keeping with the report recommendations as a whole." They made it clear that there should not be an age cut-off for IBI therapy. They warned that children will fail in their progress or will even lose their previously acquired skills. This government forced vulnerable children and families to fight to prove what the expert panel had already told them. That is just wrong.

Changes have been made, but confusion remains and families with children over five are still being told they're not eligible for IBI. We still have a long way to go to ensure that children with autism get the therapy that they need when they need it.

I implore the new minister to listen to families, to listen to the experts. Families should not have to fight at every turn to get the treatment that their children so desperately need to thrive.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Since arriving at Queen's Park, I've worked to advocate for improved transit in my riding of Kitchener Centre. I'm happy to say that we had some very positive announcements from our government this summer, announcements that will improve transit for people in all of Waterloo region.

This summer I stood beside our Premier and the Minister of Transportation to announce a \$43-million transit hub to be built in downtown Kitchener. This hub is going to allow commuters to seamlessly connect from GO trains and buses to Grand River Transit and the future LRT.

1510

We also announced that the province has reached an agreement in principle with CN Rail. A new bypass will free up the line for passenger trains and will ultimately increase capacity and speed along this corridor.

Our transportation minister was back the next week to announce a new GO train stop that's going to be built just outside Kitchener, in Breslau. It will feature a large parking garage so commuters can leave their cars there, hop on the train and head for the GTA.

A week ago, we doubled the number of morning and afternoon GO trains from four to eight, along with adding a new express GO bus service that runs all day between Kitchener and Toronto. I'm happy to report that progress is continuing on construction of the LRT and the new Highway 7.

Mr. Speaker, transit moves people, transit connects communities and transit contributes to strong economies, and I'm proud to be part of a team that's bringing better transit to my community.

CALVIN STEIN

Mr. Todd Smith: Sometimes the reference to "heroes" gets tossed around a little too cavalierly, but for

51-year-old Calvin Stein of Madoc in Prince Edward-Hastings, the moniker fits perfectly.

Earlier this summer, a team of horses competing in the horse pull at the Tweed Fair broke free from their handler and began to stampede through the fairgrounds, slamming into a car and a truck and then charging toward fairgoers. That's when Calvin leaped to the rescue. The Hydro One lineman, who's also a cash-crop farmer, saw the horses steaming toward a young family—a dad with three little children—in their path. Calvin, who's a horseman himself, saw the dad pull two of the kids to safety, but the little three-year-old girl was about to be trampled, unaware of the pending danger. Calvin grabbed her and threw her to safety between a couple of vehicles as the team of horses then mowed him down.

In his words, he flipped and flopped as the horses trampled his back and head. He recalls a pool of blood and not being able to breathe, and thought to himself, "This is how Calvin is gonna croak." Thankfully, he didn't. But he did sustain some pretty serious injuries: a broken orbital socket, a pretty mangled eye, a concussion, and some very deep cuts to his face and head that are going to leave some pretty nasty scars for years to come. Calvin, make sure you wear those scars proudly, because in July 2016 you were a hero.

Calvin dislikes being referred to as a hero. Instead, he bestows that title on our men and women in uniform and emergency services. But this summer, Calvin Stein of Madoc was indeed a hero, and he should be thanked by all of us in the Ontario Legislature.

COMMUNITY BARBECUE

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I want to start off by saying that it's wonderful to be back. Welcome back, everyone. I hope everyone enjoyed their summer, spending time with their constituents, their families and their friends.

On Saturday, September 3, I organized my second annual back-to-school community barbecue at Dufferin Grove Park in the heart of my riding of Davenport. Over 500 community members of all ages attended the event, where they enjoyed complimentary hot dogs, hamburgers, veggie burgers, gummy candy and ice cream to beat the heat. Many local organizations were on hand to provide information about their programs and services, including Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre and Sporting FC soccer academy.

Throughout the afternoon, there were musical performances by lion dancers and martial artists from the Vietnamese Association of Toronto and great music by TNT Productions. Throughout the park, there were many activities for kids, including face painting, soccer drills, dancing, and a safety display with fire helmets from local safety partners from the Toronto Fire Fighters' Association, at station 345 in Davenport.

I want to thank all the local organizations, volunteers and businesses who donated their time and resources to make this event so fantastic. A special shout-out to Can-

ada Pure, Dovercourt Boys and Girls Club, and Downtown Lumber, and to Nitta Gelatin, who provided the gummy candy.

This event is always a great way to bring the community together and to celebrate the end of summer. It is wonderful to be able to catch up with so many of my constituents and families in Davenport at this yearly event, and I hope to see them all again next year.

ERICA WIEBE

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I rise today to honour a great Olympic athlete from my riding. Erica Wiebe is an Olympic champion who won the gold medal in women's wrestling in Rio de Janeiro a few weeks ago. I'm proud of her achievement and I'm proud she's from Stittsville in my riding of Carleton-Mississippi Mills.

Erica follows in the footsteps of other great Canadian athletes: two-time Olympic medallist Carol Huynh, who won Canada's first-ever gold medal in women's wrestling at Beijing, and Tonya Verbeek, who took two silvers and a bronze, also in women's wrestling, at three different Olympics.

Sports contribute so much to Canadian society. They encourage physical fitness, strength and good health. They also promote important social skills such as teamwork and unity. Sport teaches us a healthy spirit of rivalry and to be gracious in both defeat and victory. It teaches self-discipline and a respect for the rules of the game. It is a great source of civic pride in Ontario.

Team spirit is at the foundation of good citizenship. To paraphrase Edmund Burke, being part of a team teaches us to love our society, our country, and our fellow citizens.

In life, we all try to play to our strengths. We try to use our individual talents to the fullest. Society thrives when we all do so for the common good. This is what sport teaches us. So I hope you will all join me in saluting the great Olympic gold-medal victory of Erica Wiebe.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Steve Clark: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, pursuant to standing order 111(b).

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Steve Clark: No, thanks.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 111(b), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND
SOCIAL SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT
(SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RESEARCH
COMMISSION), 2016

LOI DE 2016 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LE MINISTÈRE DES SERVICES
SOCIAUX ET COMMUNAUTAIRES
(COMMISSION DE RECHERCHE
SUR L'AIDE SOCIALE)

Mr. Paul Miller moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 6, An Act to amend the Ministry of Community and Social Services Act to establish the Social Assistance Research Commission / Projet de loi 6, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère des Services sociaux et communautaires afin de créer la Commission de recherche sur l'aide sociale.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Paul Miller: Five short months ago, this bill was passed unanimously in this House and sent to committee. I'm hoping that this will be dealt with expediently and it will get through to third reading and royal assent. It's very important to the 900,000 people in our communities that are struggling. It was a good feeling when the bill passed second reading and moved on to committee; unfortunately, the prorogation caused some setbacks.

We're moving in the right direction, Speaker. I hope it continues.

PROMOTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING
ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA PROMOTION
DU LOGEMENT ABORDABLE

Mr. Ballard moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 7, An Act to amend or repeal various Acts with respect to housing and planning / Projet de loi 7, Loi modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois en ce qui concerne le logement et l'aménagement du territoire.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Hon. Chris Ballard: I rise today to introduce the Promoting Affordable Housing Act, which would amend the Planning Act, the Development Charges Act, the Housing Services Act and the Residential Tenancies Act.

1520

Our proposed package of reforms would, if passed, help to ensure that the people of Ontario have better access to affordable and adequate housing. The proposed reforms would also help to modernize social housing by giving local service managers more flexibility in administering and delivering social housing in their communities.

HOUSING SERVICES CORPORATION
ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016
SUR LA RESPONSABILISATION
DE LA SOCIÉTÉ DES SERVICES
DE LOGEMENT

Mr. Hardeman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 8, An Act to amend the Housing Services Act, 2011 and the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act, 1996 / Projet de loi 8, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2011 sur les services de logement et la Loi de 1996 sur la divulgation des traitements dans le secteur public.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: In the housing bill that the government introduced today, it once again failed to deal with the waste and misuse of affordable housing dollars, so I am reintroducing the Housing Services Corporation Accountability Act. It amends the Housing Services Act, 2011 in the following ways:

Section 150 is amended to permit the Auditor General to audit the accounts of the Housing Services Corp. and of each of its subsidiaries.

Section 151 is amended so that the members of the Housing Services Corp. such as service manager and local housing corporation are not required to participate in any of the corporation's programs or activities. This will save social housing proprietors money by letting them purchase natural gas and insurance at the best price.

END AGE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST
STROKE RECOVERY PATIENTS ACT,
2016

LOI DE 2016 VISANT À METTRE FIN
À LA DISCRIMINATION FONDÉE
SUR L'ÂGE ENVERS LES MALADES
SE RÉTABLISSANT D'UN ACCIDENT
VASCULAIRE CÉRÉBRAL

Mr. Coe moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 9, An Act to amend the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Act / Projet de loi 9, Loi modifiant la

Loi sur le ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Lorne Coe: The bill amends the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Act to set out additional duty for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care with respect to patients who are recovering from a stroke.

STONERIDGE DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION
ACT, 2016

Mr. Dong moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr49, An Act to revive Stoneridge Development Corporation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

The member from Niagara West—Glanbrook, I understand you have three bills. I'll hear all of them.

Mr. Tim Hudak: If I can beg your indulgence, Speaker, I have three private members' bills to put before the record. I found myself with spare time on my hands.

OPPORTUNITY IN THE SHARING
ECONOMY ACT, 2016
LOI DE 2016 SUR LES POSSIBILITÉS
OFFERTES PAR L'ÉCONOMIE
DE PARTAGE

Mr. Hudak moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 10, An Act to enact two new Acts and to amend other Acts to regulate transportation network vehicles, to provide freedom for individual residential property owners to share their property for consideration with others and to deal with the expenses of public sector employees and contractors in that connection / Projet de loi 10, Loi visant à édicter deux nouvelles lois et à modifier d'autres lois pour réglementer les véhicules de réseau numérique de transport, pour donner aux particuliers propriétaires de biens résidentiels la liberté de partager leur bien avec d'autres moyennant contrepartie et pour traiter des dépenses des employés et entrepreneurs du secteur public en lien avec ces questions.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Tim Hudak: The bill may seem familiar to members because it did pass in a previous form 32-9,

with the support of the PC members and many Liberal members, and I thank them for that. I needed to reintroduce it because of prorogation.

You may recall, Speaker, that it had three main components: to legalize province-wide ride sharing, home sharing and parking sharing; it would create a province-wide framework of similar rules; and also enable government employees to use the new sharing economy services on an equivalent basis to traditional services.

FREE MY RYE ACT (LIQUOR STATUTE
LAW AMENDMENT), 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA VENTE LIBRE
DE WHISKY (MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES BOISSONS
ALCOOLIQUES)

Mr. Hudak moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 11, An Act to amend the Liquor Control Act and the Liquor Licence Act with respect to the sale of spirits / Projet de loi 11, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les alcools et la Loi sur les permis d'alcool en ce qui concerne la vente de spiritueux.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Tim Hudak: The short title for this bill is the Free My Rye Act. Basically, it emulates some positive measures brought forward by the current government and the preceding PC government to extend benefits that exist for VQA wineries and craft breweries to small distilleries.

By way of example, it would create more access for small distillers across our province; it would lower the tax rate to encourage more investment and job creation in distillers; it would allow the direct delivery of spirits to bars, restaurants and customers; and it would allow spirits to be sold by the glass at licensed establishments, as exists for beer and wine, with the goal of creating more jobs and more investment and spinoffs in agriculture.

PROTECTION FOR MOTOR VEHICLE
ACCIDENT VICTIMS AND OTHER
CONSUMERS FROM UNFAIR LEGAL
PRACTICES ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA PROTECTION
DES VICTIMES D'ACCIDENTS
DE VÉHICULES AUTOMOBILES
ET D'AUTRES CONSOMMATEURS
CONTRE LES PRATIQUES
JURIDIQUES INJUSTES

Mr. Hudak moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 12, An Act to amend the Law Society Act, the Insurance Act and the Solicitors Act with respect to referral fees, contingency fees and awards for personal injury involving the use of an automobile / Projet de loi 12, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Barreau, la Loi sur les assurances et la Loi sur les procureurs en ce qui concerne les commissions pour recommandation, les honoraires conditionnels et les indemnités pour lésions corporelles impliquant l'usage d'une automobile.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Too often, vulnerable accident victims are being hit twice—first by a car, and then second by some shady and unethical legal practices that attack them in the wallet, taking sometimes, sadly, up to 50% of an accident victim's settlement.

1530

My final private member's bill as a member of this Legislative Assembly seeks to address that by the following four points:

It would prohibit lawyers in auto insurance cases from receiving referral fees, except upon the successful completion of a claim, and it eliminates cash payments for referrals and other unethical practices.

It would prescribe consumer-friendly disclosure of any fees when a lawyer enters into a fee agreement with an accident victim in a clear, comprehensible and prominent manner.

It would cap contingency fees at a fair 33% as a consumer protection measure.

And it would limit the cost of any assessment, examination, test and report of a regulated health professional to a maximum of \$2,000.

LIBERTY TIRE RECYCLING CANADA I LTD. ACT, 2016

Mr. Hardeman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr48, An Act to revive Liberty Tire Recycling Canada I Ltd.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 86, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Ms. Laurie Scott: "Keep ServiceOntario Minden Open.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services has announced it is closing the ServiceOntario centre in the town of Minden; and

"Whereas the community has several businesses, including automobile dealerships, that face increased costs and inconvenience to their customers if they lose direct access to a local ServiceOntario centre; and

"Whereas closing Minden's ServiceOntario centre would cause unnecessary hardship to young families and seniors who do not have Internet access or transportation to attend a ServiceOntario location outside of the community; and

"Whereas the government has provided no information or a business case to support its sudden decision;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Government and Consumer Services immediately reverse the decision to close Minden's ServiceOntario centre and ensure residents of this community can access government services where they live."

This petition has been signed by thousands of area residents. I am pleased to present it to page Makayla.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Percy Hatfield: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ojibway Prairie Complex is a five-park system totalling 332 hectares. It represents half of the city of Windsor's remaining natural areas;

"Whereas Ojibway has 160 species at risk—over 20% and 32% for Ontario and Canada's species at risk respectively. It represents Canada's, and the world's, most endangered ecosystem;

"Whereas over 4,000 species live on the site—over 700 plant types (100 are rare, 70 are in the reserve), over 3,000 insects, 233 bird species with breeding evidence for 71 species, and 16 mammals;

"Whereas Ojibway Park and the Ojibway Prairie Provincial Nature Reserve (OPPNR) are two of the parks in the complex adjacent to the proposed development. These parks are: (1) designated as natural heritage, environmentally significant areas, and in the case of the OPPNR, a provincially significant wetland (PSW) and an area of natural and scientific interest (ANSI); (2) protect biodiversity by hosting: eight endangered and 12 threatened species in Canada;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To designate this land with provincial importance and prevent any development on or adjacent to this land, so that the land will be protected and so too will the 91 species at risk, including six endangered and 12 threatened species on schedule 1 of the Endangered Species Act."

I fully agree. I'll sign it and give it to Amy to bring up to the Clerk.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Mr. Rick Nicholls: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government is proposing changes to regulation 440, by way of the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission (OFPMC), to replace the regulated marketing of 14 processing vegetable commodities in favour of a free-market system; and

“Whereas this removal of the negotiating authority of the Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers (OPVG) is a removal of the *raison d’être* of the OPVG in favour of an industry advisory committee; and

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the government of Ontario support the Ontario Processing Vegetable Growers’ right to negotiate price terms and conditions of contracts for processing vegetables in Ontario on producers’ behalf.”

I agree with this petition. I will sign it and I will give it to page Tori.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Madame Michelle Ellery from Hanmer in my riding. The petition reads as follows:

“Privatizing Hydro One: Another Wrong Choice.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas once you privatize Hydro One, there’s no return; and

“Whereas we’ll lose billions in reliable annual revenues for schools and hospitals; and

“Whereas we’ll lose our biggest economic asset and control over our energy future; and

“Whereas we’ll pay higher and higher hydro bills just like what’s happened elsewhere;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To stop the sale of Hydro One and make sure Ontario families benefit from owning Hydro One now and for generations to come.”

I fully agree with this petition. I will affix my name to it and ask page Brendan to bring it to the Clerk.

NATURAL GAS

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas currently 76% of homes in Ontario use natural gas for heat; and

“Whereas natural gas is a clean, reliable and affordable fuel source and its price has been steadily in decline for several years; and

“Whereas under Premier Wynne’s new plan, all homes and buildings built after 2030 will be barred from using natural gas; and

“Whereas making the switch from natural gas to electric heat will cost an average of \$3,000 extra per home and homeowners will be faced with at least \$4,500 in renovation costs; and

“Whereas the government’s misguided energy policies have already resulted in unaffordable business and residential energy rates that are forcing jobs out of the province; and

“Whereas the Minister of Energy is on the record recommending Ontarians switch to natural gas to escape exorbitant hydro bills;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To immediately reconsider the plan to ban natural gas heat from Ontario buildings and new construction.”

I agree with this and will pass it off to page Makayla.

MISSING PERSONS

Ms. Catherine Fife: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario does not have missing persons legislation; and

“Whereas police are not able to conduct a thorough investigation upon receipt of a missing person report where criminal activity is not considered the cause; and

“Whereas this impedes investigators in determining the status and possibly the location of missing persons; and

“Whereas this legislation exists and is effective in other provinces; and

“Whereas negotiating rights to safety that do not violate rights to privacy has been a challenge in establishing missing persons law;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“We ask that the Attorney General’s office work with the office of the privacy commissioner to implement missing persons legislation that grants investigators the opportunity to apply for permissions to access information that will assist in determining the safety or whereabouts of missing persons for whom criminal activity is not considered the cause.”

I support this petition. I will affix my signature and give this to page Simone.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Victor Fedeli: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas electricity rates have risen by more than 300% since the current Liberal government took office; and

“Whereas over half of Ontarians’ power bills are regulatory and delivery charges and the global adjustment; and

“Whereas the global adjustment is a tangible measure of how much Ontario must overpay for unneeded wind

and solar power, and the cost of offloading excess power to our neighbours at a loss; and

1540

"Whereas the market rate for electricity, according to IESO data, has been less than three cents per kilowatt hour to date in 2016, yet the Liberal government's lack of responsible science-based planning has not allowed these reductions to be passed on to Ontarians, resulting in electrical bills several times more than that amount; and

"Whereas the implementation of cap-and-trade will drive the cost of electricity even higher and deny Ontarians the option to choose affordable natural gas heating; and

"Whereas more and more Ontarians are being forced to cut down on essential expenses such as food and medicines in order to pay their increasingly unaffordable electricity bills; and

"Whereas the ill-conceived energy policies of this Liberal government that ignored the advice of independent experts and government agencies, such as the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) and the independent electrical system operator (IESO), and are not based on science have resulted in Ontarians' electricity costs rising, despite lower natural gas costs and increased energy conservation in the province;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To take immediate steps to reduce the total cost of electricity paid for by Ontarians, including costs associated with power consumed, the global adjustment, delivery charges, administrative charges, tax and any other charges added to an Ontarian's energy bills."

There are 1,500 of these petitions. I agree with it, sign my name and give it to page Amy.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: "Petition Supporting a \$15 Minimum Wage.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas a growing number of Ontarians are affected by the growth in low-wage, part-time, casual, temporary and insecure employment; and

"Whereas too many workers are unprotected by current minimum standards outlined in employment and labour laws; and

"Whereas the Ontario government is currently engaging in a public consultation to review and improve employment and labour laws in the province;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Implement a minimum wage of \$15 an hour."

I sign this petition and give it to page Adam to deliver to the table.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario drivers aged 80 and over must complete group education sessions, driver record reviews, vision tests and non-computerized in-class assessment in order to renew their licences; and

"Whereas in Cornwall and Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry classes have been cancelled without notice due to staff shortages; and

"Whereas seniors are forced to drive needlessly and wait at offices for temporary licences, which is neither productive nor fair to clients; and

"Whereas seniors in Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry who require a functional assessment must drive to Ottawa or Smiths Falls and complete driving tests in a stressful and unfamiliar environment; and

"Whereas it is the government's duty to serve Ontario residents locally and conveniently;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) To deliver group education sessions and assessments on a walk-in basis at an existing facility such as Cornwall DriveTest Centre; and

"(2) To take immediate steps to bring local delivery of functional assessment services to Cornwall and the united counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry."

I do agree with this and pass it off to page Zoe.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Terri Sharpe from Garson in my riding for this petition. It reads as follows:

"Time to Care.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas quality of care for the 77,000 residents of (LTC) homes is a priority for many Ontario families; and

"Whereas the provincial government does not provide adequate funding to ensure care and staffing levels in LTC homes to keep pace with residents' increasing acuity and the growing number of residents with complex behaviours; and

"Whereas several Ontario coroner's inquests into LTC homes deaths have recommended an increase in direct hands-on care for residents and staffing levels and the most reputable studies on this topic recommend 4.1 hours of direct care per day;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

"Amend the LTC Homes Act (2007) for a legislated minimum care standard of four hours per resident per day adjusted for acuity level and case mix."

I'm happy to present this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Sarah to bring it to the Clerk.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Michael Harris: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's Drive Clean Program was implemented only as a temporary measure to reduce high levels of vehicle emissions and smog; and

"Whereas vehicles' emissions have declined so significantly from 1998 to 2010 that they are no longer among the major domestic contributors to smog in Ontario; and

"Whereas the overwhelming majority of reductions in vehicle emissions were, in fact, the result of factors other than the Drive Clean program, such as tighter manufacturing standards for emission-control technologies; and

"Whereas from 1999 to 2010 the percentage of vehicles that failed emissions testing under the Drive Clean program steadily declined from 16% to 5%; and

"Whereas the environment minister has ignored advances in technology and introduced a new, computerized emissions test that is less reliable and prone to error; and

"Whereas the new Drive Clean test no longer assesses tailpipe emissions, but instead scans the on-board diagnostics systems of vehicles, which already perform a series of continuous and periodic emissions checks; and

"Whereas the new Drive Clean test has caused the failure rate to double in less than two months as a result of technical problems with the new emissions testing method; and

"Whereas this new emissions test has caused numerous false 'fails', which have resulted in the overcharging of testing fees for Ontario drivers and car dealerships, thereby causing unwarranted economic hardship and stress;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"That the Minister of the Environment must take immediate steps to begin phasing out the Drive Clean program."

I wholeheartedly agree with this. I'll sign it and send it down with page Brendan.

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Madame Julie Perreault from Hanmer, in my riding, for this petition. Here it goes:

"Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

"Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

"Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of gas price regulation; and

"Whereas jurisdictions with gas price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices;"

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

"Mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price

volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition."

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask my good page Gideon to bring it to the Clerk.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I beg to inform this House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business, such that Mr. McDonnell assumes ballot item number 2, Ms. Thompson assumes ballot item number 3, Mr. Coe assumes ballot item number 4, Mr. Miller—Hamilton East—Stoney Creek—assumes ballot item number 5, Ms. Scott assumes ballot number 8, Mr. Wilson assumes ballot number 33, Mr. Pettapiece assumes ballot item number 46, Mr. Bisson assumes ballot item number 65, Mr. Clark assumes ballot item number 67, Mr. Arnott assumes ballot item number 73, and Mr. Hudak assumes ballot item number 74.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 14, 2016, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise today to speak about this bill, but before I do that, I want to acknowledge the last few hours, minutes, whatever you want to call them, of the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook. Although we're on different sides of the House, I just want to wish him well. We didn't always agree, but we had a lot of respect for each other. So I wish you all the best.

Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleagues the MPP from Kitchener Centre, the Minister of Government Services and MPP Colle.

Let me begin, Speaker, to talk about Bill 1. A lot of my comments are going to be in reference to issues on Bill 1 that impact my riding, because obviously that's what I experience the most and I'm more knowledgeable to talk about.

First, I'm going to talk about electricity prices and the proposal that the throne speech brings forward to help folks deal with the energy costs. Let's be honest: My offices in my riding—and I have two of them—got a number of calls, a number of emails. People who live in rural Ontario, their energy costs were going up.

1550

In every piece of correspondence that went out of my office, I would always put in the letter, as a standard

paragraph, that I understood where they were coming from. I have a house that's fully electric, with a couple of propane fireplaces, so I felt the pain just like they did. At the same time, I did assure them that their concerns would be brought back to Queen's Park and that I would advocate on their behalf and on my behalf to see what we could do to ease that burden.

I think representing a rural riding, which it impacts—it has the majority of residents living in low-density communities or on sideroads. The fact that they're going to benefit by a close to 20% reduction in their bill is a huge, huge impact.

I will also say that to say that we've put this to bed, to rest, as I said to some of the media and some of my constituents—no. Part of our job here is to always try to improve what we do and do one better. This is going to be an ongoing process, but the reality is we understood, we listened and we put something in place to move forward.

I will also say about that that in rural Ontario, we get lots of calls from the media, because things impact the local communities. I had a number of calls from my local media. And I've got to tell you, Speaker, that this side of the House has been getting a lot of criticism from that side of the House. So be it. I get it. That's their job; that's the reality. So, Speaker, I've got to tell you what happened with two of the media calls I had. The first one, I said—because obviously they were using some speaking points from the opposition: not enough, too late and all that kind of stuff. So I go, "You know, you need to do me a favour. You need to ask the opposition what they're going to do." Lo and behold—now listen to this—that one media person says, "Well, you know what? I just did that. I just spoke to a member from the opposition." And I go—

Interjection.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'm not going to go there. I'm not going to go to identify the person, because I think—I respect—so I said, "So what was their answer?" And the answer was, "We don't have a plan yet." So how can you criticize something when you don't have a plan yet?

Interjection: I don't get it.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I don't get it. So I spoke to the other media—the second media I spoke to—and I asked the same question. They said, "I'm glad you brought that up because that's just exactly what I'm going to ask." Now, I don't know what the answer was, but I presume it would be the same as the first.

Speaker, I also want to talk a little bit about the 100 licensed child care spaces.

Mr. Grant Crack: One hundred thousand.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: One hundred thousand; thank you.

I think that's a huge impact. It will be about the same size of impact as when we first brought in full-day JK and SK. That relieved a lot of pressure off parents who were working. Child care is not cheap. I look forward to that rolling out because I know that it's going to help a lot of folks in my riding. In today's world, both moms and dads work. I know we made a choice when we had

our kids that mom stayed home. Well, none of my kids could do that with their kids. So I think we can help them that way.

I've got so much more to say, but my five minutes is up. I'm going to pass it over to my seatmate, the member from Kitchener Centre.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I'm very pleased to follow my desk mate, the member for Northumberland—Quinte West. He tells me he's got a Diane at home. Your wife's name is Diane?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It is.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: And at work he's got a Daiene. You're just surrounded by Dianes, aren't you?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'm so lucky.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I'm very pleased to take part in this discussion this afternoon on the throne speech, because it gives me an opportunity to tell you, from the point of view from my community in Kitchener Centre, how the throne speech is going to impact people and businesses that are in Kitchener Centre and Waterloo region.

We've told you that the focus of the throne speech is helping people in their everyday lives and creating jobs. In my community, we've got two of the nation's leading universities. We have an outstanding college, Conestoga College. In fact, the member for Kitchener—Conestoga, I believe, is a graduate of Conestoga College. We have a soaring high-tech sector. Manufacturing in my community is at twice the provincial stats, so it's 10% in the province and 20% in Waterloo region. We really have generous, caring people in Kitchener who volunteer, and they support our social services. These days it's really a very dynamic place to live. I always appreciate hearing from my constituents and stakeholders who are working hard every day to make our community a better place to live.

Although we are seeing this kind of growing affluence in K-W, and it's tied to our emergent tech sector, there are people who, because of their financial circumstances, are looking for ways to save. What does the throne speech have for them? You've heard of the 8% rebate on hydro bills that kicks in January 1. On average, it's going to mean a savings of about \$130 a year for the typical residential consumer, and that also applies to small businesses. Bigger businesses are going to see a break on their hydro bills. We're expanding the industrial conservation initiative, so if you have a business that's using more than a megawatt of energy, you qualify. It could save you up to 34% on your energy bill. People at home might be asking, what exactly is a megawatt of energy? It's equivalent to the amount of energy used by 1,000 homes. That's a lot of energy. Large businesses are going to save one third on their energy bill. Businesses asked for this. Homeowners have asked for this. We listened. We delivered.

Mr. Speaker, there are members of the opposition who were calling for relief on hydro costs, and here it is,

delivered to the people of Ontario. So why are they complaining? This is what they asked for. Now they're caught criticizing something they wanted. It doesn't make sense. Why don't they want people and businesses to get a break on their energy bills?

For families who are looking for help with finding child care, we're creating an additional 100,000 licensed daycare spaces over the next five years. Is the opposition against this too? When those kids grow up, we're offering a new Ontario Student Grant that's going to help tens of thousands of low- and middle-income students attend university and college. In fact, if your family is earning \$50,000 or less a year, your tuition is going to be free. That's a game-changer. Is the opposition also against this?

We're investing a record amount in repairing and building brand new schools, hospitals, roads, bridges and rail. You only need to visit my community of Kitchener-Waterloo to see evidence of this. You're going to see a lot of construction happening everywhere. I know there are a lot of people complaining about this, but I tell them that it's short-term pain for long-term gain. You heard me mention some of these initiatives in my member's statement this afternoon, but just to restate, we're investing \$300 million for a new LRT system in Kitchener-Waterloo. We're well into that; we're halfway through the construction. There is a new \$43-million transit hub, a new Highway 7 being built between Kitchener and Guelph, a \$35-million advanced manufacturing consortium at the University of Waterloo, \$15 million for the Lazaridis school of business at Laurier, and renewed funding for the Perimeter Institute. All of these are critical investments for Waterloo region that our municipal leaders, educators and stakeholders lobbied for—that advanced job creation—and are making us an innovation leader in Ontario, in Canada and the world.

And yet, there are opposition members who represent Waterloo region who have tried to obstruct these initiatives. But let me tell you, when there's a ground-breaking or a photo opportunity for these important events, guess who shows up to get their picture taken? What do you call that?

Interjections.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: There are people in my community who have referred to that as being the height of hypocrisy. Do you know what I call it? I call it disappointing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Do you know what I call it? I call it “no yelling at each other.” You go through me. Thank you.

Continue.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just trying to make sure that all of the members of the House can hear the important information that I'm delivering this afternoon.

I am listening to, and working with, my municipal leaders, people in the tech sector, people in manufacturing, people in the insurance industry—we have many head offices in my community—to academia, to social

services and beyond. They support—in fact, they're the ones who are driving these initiatives.

It's unsatisfactory—in fact, it's unacceptable—that the opposition, especially those members who are from Waterloo region, don't support these programs, these many initiatives that are in the throne speech. People in my community are watching and they're taking note of this apathy and how some are playing politics. This throne speech is good for Waterloo region and it's great for the province of Ontario. It's a plan that does help people and businesses.

1600

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Ottawa—Orléans.

L'hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Ça me fait plaisir aujourd'hui d'apporter ma voix à ce discours du trône qu'on a eu lundi. Pour moi, je pense que c'est important qu'on parle en français en ce moment, donc je vais peut-être demander à mes collègues to put that little piece in if you want to listen to what I'm going to be saying for a little while.

Interjection: No heckling.

L'hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Mais c'est correct. They can heckle if they want. Écoutez, j'ai des choses à dire aujourd'hui en français sur le discours du trône, et puis je veux vraiment qu'on porte attention.

Notre gouvernement a fait le choix de ne pas recourir aux réductions pour atteindre l'équilibre budgétaire. On n'a pas sacrifié dans les services publics. Justement, lorsqu'on parle de services publics, on a fait de belles annonces tout au long de l'été sur l'investissement du gouvernement en infrastructure. On n'a pas non plus augmenté la TVH ni le taux d'impôt des contribuables. Mais ce qu'on a fait, c'est de responsabiliser les gens concernant les enjeux importants des gens de toute la province.

Donc, moi, ce que j'aimerais soulever aujourd'hui, c'est par rapport plus particulièrement à l'aperçu de la création d'emplois et les enjeux des gens, de M. et M^{me} Tout-le-monde, qui chaque jour sont confrontés à certaines réalités. Ce que je vais dire, c'est qu'on les a entendus. Ce qu'on essaie de faire avec le discours du trône, dans le fond, c'est de démontrer que le plan qu'on débute et qu'on a fait avec vous depuis deux ans continue de cheminer. C'était très important qu'on le partage.

Je sais qu'on a parlé beaucoup du taux d'électricité. J'ai eu le plaisir dans les derniers mois de me promener un petit peu partout en province. J'ai parlé avec les Franco-Ontariens. J'ai parlé avec notre population ontarienne. Ce qu'on nous disait, effectivement, c'est que le taux d'électricité était très élevé, et on a répondu à cette avenue-là. On a fait une réduction. Ce qu'on a fait, c'est qu'on a réduit les coûts d'électricité—lorsqu'il va être possible—en maintenant une fiabilité du système.

Monsieur le Président, je vais être honnête, je ne fais jamais ça habituellement mais je vais être obligée de porter mes lunettes. J'ai besoin de lunettes maintenant.

Écoutez, lorsque je regarde le discours venant d'une communauté en forte croissance—Ottawa—Orléans

grandit. On a beaucoup de jeunes familles qui sont avec nous. Donc, je veux parler du fait qu'on va aider les familles à trouver les services de garde abordables dont ils ont besoin, et on va créer 100 000 places accréditées en garderie dans les cinq prochaines années, et ça, dès 2017.

On continue aussi notre engagement avec notre jeunesse. On va poursuivre nos efforts pour que nos jeunes aient les outils nécessaires pour intégrer une main-d'œuvre qui est continuellement en évolution. Si on regarde ce que le marché du travail a besoin, nous devons regarder à ce que nos jeunes vont avoir besoin comme curriculum. Encore une fois, on a adressé ça dans notre discours du trône lundi dernier.

Notre système de santé, qui est quelque chose qui est probablement le plus personnel aussi pour moi, ayant travaillé avec les aînés pendant 15 ans avant d'être ici en Chambre avec vous tous—la santé, c'est quelque chose d'important. Nous avons une population vieillissante, et on y fait référence dans le discours du trône. Lorsqu'on parle aux Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes, on leur parle aussi dans ce discours. Donc, on va investir dans nos travailleurs de première ligne. Nous aidons les personnes âgées avec les coûts des médicaments d'ordonnance, et nous réduisons les temps d'attente pour consulter un spécialiste.

Je vais aussi me permettre de dire que cet été nous avons fait de belles annonces concernant les heures de soins. Puis je veux réitérer cette perspective-là au niveau de 350 000 heures de soins infirmiers et 1,3 million d'heures de soutien personnel pour améliorer les soins à domicile et les soins communautaires qui sont, on le sait vous et moi—vous le savez très bien, monsieur le Président—tellement importants.

Je sais que mon temps avance. Je crois qu'il y a une autre personne qui va partager mon temps, donc je vais laisser un petit peu de temps à l'horaire. Merci beaucoup de m'avoir écoutée.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I must apologize to the member. She is now the Minister of Government and Consumer Services, and I introduced you as just the member from Ottawa-Orléans. I apologize profusely. And by the way, I'm learning French, so you won't be slipping anything by me, okay?

Point of order.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Point of order. Merci. Ce n'était vraiment pas nécessaire.

It was definitely not necessary. I am foremost the member for Ottawa-Orléans. I am proud to represent my community and I'm very happy to hear that you're learning français. Congrats.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Good comeback.

Hon. David Zimmer: It's the first compliment you've had in months.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Oh, man. What a day.

I'm sorry. I've got to get to the member from—it's been a long time. The member from—

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I noticed you didn't shut that point of order down, either.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I didn't, no.

The member from Eglinton-Lawrence—I'm sorry, Mr. Colle. I was distracted.

M. Mike Colle: Merci, monsieur le Président.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Very good.

Mr. Mike Colle: It's just two minutes, but I just wanted to make sure that the big part of the throne speech that I think needs a bit more attention is the emphasis on child care spaces. Sometimes there's so much going on in here, in government and in our lives that we forget the importance of child care. Because every family—it's not a matter of choice anymore—both husband and wife have to go to work, and therefore, when you have children, you have to have a safe, proper environment for them. So we need to look at, in any way we can, ensuring that there are appropriate, affordable child care spaces available in all our communities so that working families and these young children can have a safe and, again, a copacetic learning environment to be in.

On top of that, as you know, Mr. Speaker—I don't have to tell you—the cost of child care is extremely prohibitive for families of modest income. Any kind of break they can get in the cost of child care would really make it much more affordable to live in our cities and towns and communities. So the one aspect of the throne speech that I think deserves a great deal of support is the commitment to increase substantially the number of child care spaces in this province. That really will make a difference to families and children across the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments.

Mr. Jim McDonnell: It's a privilege to rise today and respond to some of the comments made across.

I guess it comes back—we've got a government that just doesn't get it. You could turn around and you could take tax dollars to look like you're lowering hydro rates. Just a year ago, they increased the rate by over \$255 for the average customer. They're dropping it \$135. They call that a win. The reason why we're using tax dollars to make some points on this hydro rate—which is now four times what it was when they came to power. And we wonder why businesses are leaving. It's because they've made a mess of the hydro program.

Everywhere you go, you look at what's been done. You look at green energy. The Premier yesterday talked about making a profit when they sell the power at a loss. I mean, it's time they wake up. People are coming into our office and they're furious. When I read headlines like "Throw the bums out of office," there's a reason for that. People are fed up. I think it's time they listened to what's going on.

1610

They talk about child care spaces, but they created the problem. They changed the rules and got rid of all these spaces, and now 20% of the population is all that is serviced with licensed spaces. Now they're going to fix

the problem—create a problem; come back on a white horse and fix it. But you know, people are getting tired.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to make some comments. I'll start off with the member from Northumberland–Quinte West. He said that there was no one offering any solutions. I'll give him a handful.

Never sell hydro. It's a public trust. You shouldn't be selling it. That's the number one solution to what you guys have been doing over there.

Never put a tax on an essential service such as electricity. You never should have done it. There's another thing you shouldn't have done.

Never pay the CEO of Hydro One \$4 million a year. You're raising my rates to pay your buddy's salary. That's the third thing you shouldn't be doing.

You can do a lot of things around here, but when you say you're going to give a rebate—as opposed to taking the tax off immediately—just do it. Do it today. It shouldn't have been there in the first place. It was a Liberal tax put on. It should never have been there. So don't say that you're going to keep charging me, charging me, charging me and give me a rebate. Take the tax off immediately. That's the fourth thing you should have done.

The other thing you can do if you want to really help us out in Ontario: Call an early election. Lead, follow or get the hell out of the way. You guys have lost the faith of this province. You no more have the trust of the people of Ontario. Get out of the way. You guys are toast.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Scarborough Southwest.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate having the opportunity to join this debate today. A lot of good points have been brought up.

There were various parts of the throne speech that were emphasized, but I wanted to mention briefly the fact that we're also working with young people, giving them the right tools for a changing workforce. We're putting more emphasis on math skills, expanding experiential learning and encouraging more young people to turn their good ideas into start-ups. I think the idea with young people is that if you get them engaged as early as possible in the education system, they'll be able to contribute more toward society later in life.

We're also doing something that I think is very important. We're helping families by adding an estimated 350,000 hours of nursing care and 1.3 million hours of personal support, and enhanced home and community care.

I can tell you from personal experience dealing with senior citizens in my riding how important it is that they get more help at home, especially from personal support workers to be able to help senior citizens and keep them at home instead of having to pay higher costs by bringing them into hospitals or nursing homes.

Finally, I just wanted to mention very briefly that, as I mentioned earlier, we're investing at record levels to build new hospitals, schools, roads, bridges and transit in communities across Ontario. Being a Toronto member, I note the improvements being made in the Toronto area, especially in Scarborough Southwest regarding the subway, GO train and bus services.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Kitchener–Conestoga.

Mr. Michael Harris: Thank you, Speaker. I know I've only got two minutes. I really am looking forward to having a bit more time on the throne speech, but as we've said before and I'll say again, this is a case of too little, too late.

It was only after a stunning by-election defeat in Scarborough—a riding that they've held since perhaps 1989, if not earlier, electing my new colleague, Raymond Cho; I know he's pleased to have been introduced this week—that they finally realized, after hearing it at the doors, how Ontarians are fed up with the extremely high hydro rates across the province.

I know that the members—including the one from Kitchener Centre who just had an opportunity to speak—are getting those calls to their offices. You look at the energy crisis itself. Sure, you give 8% off hydro bills, but you're actually not addressing the fundamental problems that have allowed our hydro prices to skyrocket to some of the highest electricity rates here on the continent, let alone all the additional costs.

I have to bring back up the gas plants, which will have added a billion dollars to our energy system without actually generating one kilowatt of electricity.

This is their track record over the last 13 years of failed Liberal government policy decisions, on top of all of the scandal, waste and mismanagement. I've got 30 seconds, but I would almost need 30 hours to get into all of that.

But I know they're hearing it at the doorsteps; I know that they're hearing it in the offices. We only have 20 months to go before they're finally given the ultimatum by Ontarians, and we'll hopefully create a bit of relief after that.

Thanks for the two minutes, Speaker. I look forward to speaking more on the throne speech when I have my time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Eglinton–Lawrence has two minutes.

Mr. Mike Colle: I want to thank the members from Stormont–Dundas, Windsor–Tecumseh, Scarborough Southwest and Kitchener–Conestoga for their comments.

I've been through a number of terms here, in opposition and in government, and one lesson I've learned is you never are arrogant enough to think and predict what the people are going to do in an election. You can see both of these parties are already arrogantly saying, "This is what's going to happen." I've seen it before, Mr. Speaker, where that kind of arrogance leads to a big disappointment, and that's why the important thing is to think about how we can help the people of Ontario—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I don't want to take your time, but there's a certain member who's yelling across the floor, and I've already asked him twice, so a friendly warning at this point—and to the other member from across the way who's answering him, a friendly warning.

The member from Eglinton—Lawrence may continue. Try to keep to the script. You're elevating the problems a little bit with the talk about elections.

Mr. Mike Colle: Anyway, if I could continue, I was speaking in my two-minute response to the members, saying that it is important not to just put all your eggs in an election basket, and stay to the work at hand in helping the people of Ontario, to make sure they have good child care, make sure they have affordable housing and make sure they have affordable electricity.

That's what they want us to do. They don't want what the opposition is doing, and that's just playing the election card and hoping and praying that magically they'll be in power. They've done that before. You saw what happened in the last election. They were already measuring the drapes in our offices, and boom. Along came, "Oh, yes. We are going to create a million jobs. Yes, we're going to fire a hundred thousand." Then the third party sits there, missing in action. They got wiped out almost across the province.

So don't be so arrogant. Wait for the people to decide. Wait to listen to the people.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you to the member from Eglinton—Lawrence for sticking to the script. Thanks so much.

The member from Nipissing.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good afternoon, Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to speak for the next 20 minutes about the speech from the throne.

They talked about hitting the reset button, Speaker, but sadly, what we're seeing from this government is that they're merely reintroducing all of their old bills again. There's nothing reset. There's nothing invigorated.

What we did see was a billion-dollar band-aid coming out for the beleaguered hydro sector, so I want to spend my 20 minutes talking about how we got into this mess at Hydro, and if there's time, Speaker, I can talk about some potential ways to get out of it.

Only a few weeks ago, the Premier was in my hometown, and the new energy minister was in my hometown, and they talked about the fact that there is no crisis in hydro. In fact, on Global TV, the minister was able to say, "I'm not ready to declare that there's a crisis in hydro."

Three weeks later, Speaker, of course, as you've heard, after the stunning election loss for the Liberals of Scarborough—Rouge River and the introduction of our new member, Raymond Cho, all of a sudden now, there's a crisis. They've realized it.

1620

The Premier said, "This isn't just a Toronto issue; this is everywhere." Well, I have to say to the Premier and the Liberal Party, for five years, we on this side of the aisle

have been talking about the crisis in energy. We have brought example after example after example. I can tell you, Speaker—I've used this example maybe 30 times in the Legislature and it never seemed to sink in: When we—many of us, Liberals, NDP and the PCs—were travelling Ontario in the pre-budget consultations, in Ottawa we heard from Jennifer. I've used this example. Jennifer sat in front of us. She's an ODSP recipient. She said, "I have to decide whether to heat or eat." She told us the times that she shuts the power off in her apartment completely so that she can save enough money to buy food. That's the reality. They were there; they sat in that hearing. "No, there's no crisis. There's no crisis in hydro."

I can tell you, Speaker, that in November 2011, just after the 2011 election, the Auditor General came out with his report and he said to us at that time, "Man, we've got a real crisis in the energy file." A couple of things: He said that the debt retirement charge has already been paid off. We paid \$8.7 billion of the debt retirement charge and it was only \$7.8 billion, yet it was on the bills. He wondered, "Why are you still charging the people of Ontario a billion dollars a year in the debt retirement charge?" So the government, this year, took it off and it wants a pat on the back: "Well, we reduced your bill by taking off the debt retirement charge." Well, they're five years late. They've collected another \$5 billion, and they've wasted that money and mismanaged it, and lost some of it in scandals. It's this patting themselves on the back for these things that have gotten us nowhere that they don't deserve. They didn't deserve to keep that money from the people of Ontario.

The Auditor General also told us, "There's this thing called global adjustment. You had better start paying attention to it." At that time, it was several hundred million a year. He laid out a plan for what it would escalate to in 2015, and he said, "If you do not make a major change in your strategy, in 2015, it's going to hit a billion dollars a year." Well, lo and behold, in 2015, it hit a billion dollars. I think he was about \$20 million off from his number. That's pretty good forecasting, five years out.

Did they listen? Not a peep, not a word—nothing. They didn't change anything, and lo and behold, now we have a crisis. They just realized now that there's a crisis. So what do they do? Now they're trying to lay blame: "It wasn't us." This is another one of these "the dog ate my homework" moments: "It's not us. We didn't do anything. We inherited an old system. That's the problem. We had to fix 10,000 kilometres of transmission line."

Two things on that: First of all, whether they laid that much transmission line or not, I don't know. I don't believe them. But I can tell you that what they did in Ontario was to get to these far-flung wind turbine and solar projects that needed thousands of miles of transmission lines. So if they did put it down, it wasn't to fix the system, it was to get to these ridiculously expensive wind and solar contracts.

They're telling us now—the Premier repeated it yesterday—the new talking points: "No, no, we inherited

the system, and that's why your bills are where they are." But that is not what the Auditor General told us. Only in December, on page 220 of the Auditor General's annual report, she said, "Most of the increase in what consumers pay for electricity has come from generation-cost increases." That's not these transmission lines the Premier's talking about. They account for "60% of the overall cost of electricity." So never mind what the Premier and the energy minister are making up in these new talking points of theirs; let's look at the facts from the auditor.

She went on to say, "Generation costs have increased by 74% over the last decade, from \$6.7 billion in 2004 to \$11.8 billion in 2014, and they are expected to grow to \$13.8 billion by 2022. In particular, global adjustment fees have increased significantly, from \$650 million in 2006"—\$650 million in one year—to \$7 billion in 2014. It's actually \$7.03 billion. That's where I said the auditor said that if we're not careful, that could hit \$7 billion by 2014. Well, lo and behold, it did because they didn't change anything. Absolutely against what the Premier said, it is not these transmission lines. It is, according to the auditor, that "From 2006 to 2014, electricity consumers have already paid a total of \$37 billion"—this is in generation, Speaker—"and they are expected to pay another \$133 billion in global adjustment" in the next 17 years.

Speaker, you can talk all these talking points and try to lay blame. It is all about the flawed Liberal policies that they brought in that created this crisis five years ago that they only finally noticed last week.

The Auditor General tells us a couple of other things, too. The Liberals have been using the energy file as their play toy for many, many years. Whenever they need to raid a piggy bank, that's where they go. The Auditor General told us in fact that—this is on page 214—"The ministry has issued a total of 93 directives." This is when the energy experts tell you one thing and the energy minister says, "I don't like that. That's not going to help me. Let me issue a ministerial directive." These are very rare, but this government, from 2004 to 2014—93 directives. I'm quoting the auditor: "Through them, it has made a number of decisions about power generation—decisions that sometimes went against the OPA's technical advice...." The auditor stated, "It is our view that the ministry did not fully consider the state of the electricity market or the long-term effects different supply mix scenarios would have on Ontario's power system ... A number of them have resulted in significant costs to electricity consumers."

Speaker, you can't deny the facts from the auditor. It is the generation that they put on and it is their own directives telling the ministry, "I don't care what you said. I'm doing it my way"—93 times they told them that, and it resulted in significant costs.

One of them is a great example. These are the auditor's words: "Expensive wind and solar energy—we calculate that electricity consumers have had to pay \$9.2 billion ... more for renewables over the 20-year contract

terms under the ministry's" new price compared to the old pricing model. That's for the same amount of green energy. Absolutely purchasing the same amount of these renewables—\$9.2 billion to do it their way because they issued a directive that said, "I don't care how you want to buy it. I don't care that you want to buy it at an efficient rate and at a proper price. I'm going to fritter away \$9.2 billion for whatever reason."

Now, of course, we have learned later that all of these contracts to Liberal-friendly companies have given them millions and millions of dollars in Liberal coffers. That, of course, is not the Auditor General. That's me sharing what we've learned over the last few months.

Speaker, the auditor has a couple of other examples. When the Premier yesterday—I was startled. I almost fell off my seat when she said that we make a profit selling power to the United States and Quebec. I thought, now I completely understand why the Liberals don't see anything wrong with the pain that the Jennifers have, because they think the revenue they get from the States and Quebec, paltry as it is, is profit. They forget that there are expenses against that. But the Auditor General doesn't forget. She told us that since power is exported at prices below what generators are paid, the province has paid \$3.1 billion to Quebec and the United States to take our surplus power. This is the Auditor General. The Premier says we make a profit at it. When you pay somebody to take your power, I don't know how you make a profit. The Auditor General said that it's \$3.1 billion that we pay. We are the best economic development generator that New York and Ohio have. Those companies that now buy this cheap power from Ohio and Quebec compete against us, and I'll tell you, they're eating our lunch. It's absolutely unbelievable, what's happening.

1630

I can tell you that the government may not hear, so let's look at a couple of examples. Let me look at a letter to the editor in the energy minister's own riding. This is in the Sudbury Star. I'll look at a couple of things—because, of course, you've heard the Premier and the energy minister say, "We spent all that money fixing the system." Well, of course, the auditor said that that's not true. We know that that's changed now, so we understand that. It's not these transmission lines. Then they said, "That's because we don't want any more brownouts." Well, I can tell you, the letter to the editor in the Sudbury Star to Glenn Thibeault says:

"I'm sure that Thibeault"—they call him "Thibeault"—"is now fully aware that nine downtown Toronto high-rise condominiums have had four power outages in the last two weeks." This is just from this week.

"On Sept. 7, 2,000 customers were affected...."

"Thibeault should be asking them if the electricity ... under his leadership is reliable and if they're experiencing blackouts.

"Not only do we still have blackouts and brownouts under" this "Liberal leadership, but we're also paying thousands more."

Maybe he'll listen to his own residents who are writing letters to the editor. But I can tell you that this new system that the Premier seems—she forgets the day a year ago when she was running around giving gift cards to the people in Toronto when they experienced the blackouts. It's convenient to mentally black out the days, but the physical blackout lasted.

I can tell you, every Friday morning when I go down to my office at home, I have to reboot my computer because my power has flickered. I live out in the country; I'll admit that. I live in Corbeil—a beautiful place—but we do have unreliable power. Every single Friday, I go through a routine. I have to reboot my computer and keep tapping my phone to get the light back on. These are the little things you have to do. I have to reset the flashing clock—all of these things, because every single Friday morning, when I get home, one day throughout the week the power went off.

I can tell you, on Christmas Day—it was the worst Christmas we ever had this year. We had 20 people coming over on Christmas Day. On Christmas Eve, around 11 in the morning, the power went off. It was off for two days. The Christmas meal, we had to—literally, Patty went out and barbecued as much of what she could barbecue. We live in the country. When we lose power, we don't have running water because there's no pump. You can't flush a toilet because there's no pump. There's no heat in the house because even though we're lucky enough to have natural gas, there's no blower on the furnace that works. I didn't see the Premier running around in North Bay or Corbeil when we had no power. This is the reliable system that they brag about today. This is the kind of arrogance that we face here. I can tell you: All those new talking points that they have—they don't fly because they defy exactly what the Auditor General said.

It's sad in the province of Ontario that when you listen to a Premier or one of the ministers, there's nothing you can actually believe. It always takes the Auditor General, the Financial Accountability Officer or the OPP to tell us the truth. I'll tell you, we've got to be getting awfully tired of that in Ontario, when you can't even rely on anything that these people have to say.

I've been running a petition. I read the petition today. I read it yesterday. I have 1,500 signatures. I can tell you, in my hometown, when I started my petition, here's one of the letters that I received. It said:

"Thank you for giving us the chance to be heard. Some of us are apartment-dwellers and are terrified our rents will have to rise substantially in order to cover this obscene hydro rate that the Liberals have stuck us with. I wish you success with this petition.

"PS. We're all seniors."

I thank Sheryl for sending me that note.

I got an interesting letter from a Sudbury business. I won't mention the Sudbury business name or who it is. It said:

"Mr. Fedeli,

"I write this letter in support of your petition. Managing a small business in Sudbury, I have seen first-hand the skyrocketing cost of hydro in the past few years. When we opened the business at our current location in 2004, our average hydro bill was \$250 a month. Last week, I received a bill for over \$900."

Then he goes on to talk about all the energy savings they put in: timers, lighting, LEDs; they disconnected a hot water tank, and they go on and on with all the savings they tried. But he said, "I've had to lay off an employee last January because it was either hydro or the employee." Then he talks about what I should tell the energy minister, which I won't be able to read in the Legislature.

But I can tell you, Speaker, in my hometown of North Bay, we're really hearing it loud and clear. The headline in the North Bay Nugget two weeks ago now: "Hydro 'Out of Control.'" The kicker is, "If she (Premier Kathleen Wynne) was the CEO of a company, she would be gone." Then it goes into some awfully sad stories of families who are affected by their skyrocketing hydro rates.

This one: "Soaring Hydro Rates Killing Jobs." That's the headline of the North Bay Nugget on August 27. It gets into the story of a woodworker who is forced to lay off a staff member just so he can afford to pay his hydro bill.

That's why "Soaring Hydro Rates Killing Jobs" is the headline. It is what's happening. It's not unlike anything we have been saying here for the five years I've been here. We've heard from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, who wrote a special paper; the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, who wrote a paper—ignored by the Liberals, completely ignored until, in their own minds, we are now at a crisis. Well, we've been at a crisis for years. Why do you think we have lost 350,000 manufacturing jobs in Ontario? We have the highest energy rates in North America.

We've always talked about our hydro rates at home. They're even more expensive than Hawaii's. Most people here, especially on the Liberal side, where they don't have too many northern or rural members, don't understand the difference. The peak rates in Ontario are 18.6 cents a kilowatt hour, but where I live in Corbeil—I live in a medium-density centre, not a high-density one like Toronto—I pay 22 cents. Just down the road from me, about two miles down the road, is a friend of mine, Phil Konig. He pays 26.5 cents a kilowatt hour in peak times. That's because he's in what they call low density.

There are three different levels here, and many people, especially on the government side, would absolutely not be aware of that. In fact, many people in Ontario would not be aware of that. That is a higher rate than hydro in Hawaii, an island thousands of miles away, where they have to generate their own power. But all of these experts have been telling us that.

I want to say a special thanks to Global TV for the phenomenal exposé they did this summer. Some of the headlines of their stories were called "Energy Minister in the Dark," "The High Cost of Soaring Hydro," "Hydro

Horror Stories,” “Families Struggle”—and the list goes on and on. I attribute a lot of the changes in this Liberal government to what happened in the exposé on Global TV and other media who have finally looked and said, “Wow, we really do have a crisis here in Ontario.”

Speaker, in the remaining seconds that I have, I can tell you that, as finance critic, I look at this billion-dollar band-aid—and I asked the Premier and did not get an answer: Where are you getting the money? They’re not fixing any of these problems that the Auditor General and other experts have outlined; they’re just borrowing a billion dollars to give us a billion dollars, and hopefully we’ll go away for a while. Well, that just does not work.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I’m certainly pleased to rise this afternoon to talk about hydro and the crisis that we have in Ontario. The NDP has been talking about this crisis for a long time. It’s nice to see the Conservatives are now seeing how important it is.

But I want to talk about a meeting last night—and I want the Liberals to listen to this, although a lot of them aren’t here. I’m hoping they’re watching on TV. Last night, we had a meeting in Port Colborne by a local distributor that services Fort Erie and Port Colborne to talk about rates going up less than \$2. People came and listened to the presentation for about 45 minutes. Then single moms, single dads and seniors started talking to the VP. They started screaming about their hydro rates and how they could not pay their bills. They weren’t there about the \$2; they were there about their bills that have increased by 50% and 75% and 100%. They broke down crying—and I want you guys to hear this—in front of a hundred people that they don’t even know. They may know a few there, but they don’t know them. They came from two communities, and they’re saying to this government, “You have to stop this. My kids went back to school. I couldn’t buy school supplies. I’ve got to choose, when I get my hydro bill, whether I can feed my kids.”

1640

I’ve got to choose, if I’m a senior, whether I’m going to pay my medication. Do you know what seniors are doing because of their hydro bills today, Mr. Speaker? I know you’ll be interested in this, because I know it’s happening in Hamilton as well. They are skipping their medication. They have diabetes, they have heart disease, and they’re skipping their medication to try and pay their hydro bill. It’s an absolute disgrace in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Scarborough Southwest.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I wanted to be able to have two minutes to respond. The member from Nipissing made quite a few points regarding the throne speech that we did on Monday, two days ago. I just wanted to reply a little bit on some of the issues.

With regard to the hydro bills, we have listened to the public, and we’re taking action. The 8% PST, the provincial sales tax, is being removed.

Before I get into that in my two minutes, I just want to say that people don’t mention the fact that since we got into government, we have closed down every single coal plant that fires coal—

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Coal-fired generators.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: —coal-fired generators. Thank you. They cause a lot of pollution. I remember, when they were still open, we had a lot of smog days, especially in the summertime here in Toronto and elsewhere. The smog would be hanging over the city on hot days. Last summer, there were zero smog days, which is a big thing, because we’re saving money on health care. When we had smog days, children and senior citizens had to stay indoors, and that’s no longer happening. People can go outside and enjoy their summer and not have to worry about inhaling coal from the generating plants.

I briefly mentioned the fact that the 8% is coming off the bills. On top of that, we’ll provide additional relief by introducing legislation that would rebate the provincial portion of the harmonized sales tax. This 8% will be going into effect on January 1, 2017. Eligible small businesses would receive the rebate as well. Eligible rural and remote communities would receive additional savings, which will result in an on-bill monthly saving of about 20%, about \$45 a month, or \$540 a year. It’s significant, what we’re doing with the throne speech.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I want to thank our honourable member from Nipissing for his thorough analysis of the throne speech, which could probably be renamed as the throw-up speech, because of the fact that there was really nothing new in that speech per se.

This is a government that is 13 years of age. I use the analogy that it’s like driving a 13-year-old car that is rusty, and the brakes are shot, the transmission is shaky, the tires are bald, and yet, by throwing in a new starter, they think they’ve got a brand new car.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Same with new hair.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Well, you know what? Hitting the restart button—some people can be rather rude in their comments, I suppose.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I would ask the member to withdraw that personal comment I heard.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Continue.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Again, they tried to hit the restart button.

Let’s talk about the 8%. Again, they had the clean energy benefit, and that was 10%. They took it away, and now they’re adding 8%, making people think, “Hey, we’ve got a good deal going here.”

We also talk about what we would do differently. First of all, we would stop giving out contracts, ludicrous contracts, and eliminate the industrial wind turbines and the solar panels. One thing we need to realize was that the PC Party was the only party that voted against the Green Energy Act. We were the only party to do so. That

is driving up energy costs throughout, and now you have seniors and you have people on disability who are, in fact, suffering because of these high energy rates. That's got to stop and we will change that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: It's my honour to respond to or ask some questions or give my response to the member from Nipissing. He responded to the throne speech by addressing one of the major concerns with this government, or this throne speech, which was the issue of electricity. To put it very bluntly, it's very clear, through what the member spoke about and what we know, that the issues in the energy file lie directly as a fault of this government's failed policies. That's absolutely correct. In fact, the key piece to the member's speech, which I want to highlight, is that not only is it the government's failed policies, but a specific policy, and that is the privatization of Hydro One.

Now, the Premier likes to call this an ideology, a question of ideology, a question of, simply, philosophy. Let's look at the facts. We have independent evidence—and I believe in evidence-based decision-making—that states very clearly that selling off Hydro One, not because it's an ideologically wrong thing, is independently, on an evidence basis, going to put the province in a worse economic position. It's going to make it more difficult for the province to fund the essential services that the province needs to fund. It is a bad decision, based on evidence—not based on ideology but based on independent evidence and the independent opinion of an officer of the Legislative Assembly.

In addition, we have other examples, other jurisdictions where energy was privatized and rates increased. We have this very jurisdiction, where we've seen what happens when you deregulate electricity. Right after the deregulation of electricity by the previous Conservative government, rates went up. That is evidence. We know this. This is what happens. When you deregulate, when you privatize electricity, rates go up. This is one of the key reasons why we're in the hydro crisis we're in, and this is why the government needs to take a strong stance to stop the sale of Hydro One.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Nipissing has two minutes.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I would like to thank the members from Niagara Falls, Scarborough Southwest, Chatham-Kent-Essex and Bramalea-Gore-Malton for their thoughtful comments.

In the minute and a half that I have, I just want to touch on one more point. When we heard from the Premier again yesterday, in answering both our leader's, Patrick Brown's, questions and my questions, she talked about, "Well, the sale of Hydro One is not going to increase your hydro bill." I can tell you two things. First of all, I draw your attention to the Financial Accountability Officer. Again, hearing something from the Premier and the ministers is one thing, but actually hearing the truth from the Auditor General, the Financial

Accountability Officer or the OPP is generally where we have to get our material.

The sale of Hydro: The Financial Accountability Officer told us that there will be a long-term negative impact on the province. He said that "the initial 15% sale of Hydro would significantly reduce the province's deficit in 2015–16." So we know, through the Financial Accountability Officer and, in fact, the latest budget, that they're using this money to artificially balance. So when they say, "We're going to balance by 2017–18," the Financial Accountability Officer told us that we will plunge back into deficit immediately after the election because they're using this one-time money to balance the budget.

But taking that money—they're taking \$5 billion and using it against the debt of Hydro, but taking \$4 billion away. We still have a mortgage to pay at Hydro, and so they have to go to the hydro ratepayers and raise rates to pay the mortgage. There's no money left to pay the mortgage when you don't have an asset. So yet again, I use the Financial Accountability Officer to correct the record here.

1650

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I've been waiting for this moment for the whole day, the whole week, to respond to this throne speech. It's really interesting because the whole goal of this throne speech was to promise this restart, this moment of humility and this moment of recognizing that there were people in this province—because it's really interesting that I brought up the Building Ontario Up throne speech from July 3, 2014. It says, "Building Ontario Up," and now this speech is building "Ontario up for everyone." They remembered that they're here to work for everyone. I guess that's an encouraging step.

It's interesting, because you look at the language from the first throne speech and there's lots of talk about openness and transparency, although I must mention that the FAO, the Financial Accountability Officer, might have some challenges to that language.

I actually had to introduce a piece of legislation so an independent officer of the Legislature could access information that he should have access to. That's how open and transparent the Wynne government is. I have his report here, and I may get a chance to quote from it.

Also in that original throne speech from 2014 we heard about this activist centre where people of this province were going to be part of the solution. It was going to be an inclusive process around policy development. Meanwhile, as late as four weeks ago, the new Minister of Energy said that there was no crisis on the energy file—no crisis, even though I would say northern communities have been disproportionately hurt by these high energy costs, because they don't have other options. The previous Minister of Energy, not that long ago, actually was talking about the fact that the increase in hydro costs was no more than the cost of a cup of coffee.

It's astounding. That's where this Premier considers the activist centre to be.

The language in this throne speech had all the right touch points, I must admit. There must have been a better speech writer for the 2014 throne speech, because the throne speech we heard on Monday was really a public relations exercise in trying to manage the image—really an image-control public relations process. Here we are, as legislators in the province of Ontario, and it is Groundhog Day at Queen's Park because we are going to see the same pieces of legislation come to the fore day in and day out—almost 200 pieces. You wonder why people lose—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'm sorry, but when we cross the floor in front of the Chair, we acknowledge the Chair—not done. We move over there and we—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): If you want a megaphone I can get you one, because you're going like this. So I would appreciate it if we cut it back. If you want to have a little chit-chat, you might want to go out there and do it.

Ms. Catherine Fife: So if you wonder why people lose faith and have a crisis of confidence in politics, in politicians, in this government, you have only to look at the very cynical move around prorogation, because nothing has changed. I was listening very closely to see if there was a change in the tone from the government post-throne speech. We saw nothing.

I must point out that the Minister of Energy was in Kitchener. He was on the local CBC News. "Glenn Thibeault Says Liberals Aren't to Blame for Soaring Kitchener Gas Rates." On Monday, there was an acknowledgement: We hear people, but you will never address a problem until you admit that there is a problem. The problem is the policies and the actions of this government on the energy file. The minister goes on in this interview to—this was with Colin Butler of CBC News:

"Kitchener homeowners have been told they'll face a possible \$80-a-year hike on their gas bills thanks to the Ontario Liberals' new cap-and-trade system, but Energy Minister Glenn Thibeault suggested his government isn't to blame."

He goes on to make a few excuses. He says that they don't dictate what's happening in the energy sector, even though political interruption and intervention has been the new culture in the energy file in the province of Ontario.

It goes on to say—I mean, basically the city of Kitchener is looking for more clarification on the energy file. They want to know how this is going to impact the citizens of Kitchener.

It says in here, "In order to fall in line with the new system, Kitchener Utilities said it would have to raise rates by upwards of \$80 a year for the average Kitchener homeowner in 2017 to buy credits in time for when cap-and-trade comes into effect in 2018."

Councillor Scott Davey told CBC News on Monday, "All that's happening here is we're going to be passing on a large bill from the province to the ratepayers of our gas utility."

That's pretty interesting, that a municipality has weighed in, because municipalities, based on the latest meeting at AMO, end up picking up a lot of these pieces. I'm sure the councillor from Scarborough could attest to that. They're the very local-level politicians, and the cost of energy was the consistent theme that we heard at AMO.

The throne speech on Monday promised a little bit of relief. I think we've done the math. It's about 36 cents a day—much less than the cost of a cup of coffee—and it is not going to provide true relief. If we're honest about it, that really isn't going to address the crisis—the newly recognized crisis—in the energy file that the Premier has finally woken up to.

What we did hear in the throne speech—and you have to pay attention to language, I think—is that the Liberals are saying that they had to increase the cost of energy and that they had to make these investments because of aging infrastructure. Yet, when the Auditor General did a review of the Ministry of Energy—this is from an Adrian Morrow piece from just less than a year ago—the Auditor General said, "We found that the electricity power planning process had essentially broken down over the past decade," Ms. Lysyk said at a Queen's Park news conference. "The [energy] ministry has made a number of decisions about power generation that went against the OPA's technical advice. In addition, these decisions did not fully consider the state of the electricity market or the cost impact on consumers."

So this is really a wilful intention to ignore evidence on the energy file. And who ends up paying the price? The citizens of this province.

That leads me to the discussion around energy poverty. Energy poverty is sort of a new concept. I think the activists and advocates around the province had to come up with some language and some terminology to define what is happening. Because when energy policy goes so wrong, as has happened in the province of Ontario, the poorest people, the poorest people—the most vulnerable people in the province—end up paying the price. It is so unfortunate that that is actually the reality for people in this province of Ontario.

I do want to say, though—I want to make sure that people do understand what energy poverty is. Canadian households spend—this is interesting—at least 10% of their total expenditures on home energy use. "That's almost one tenth of Canadian households putting 10 cents of every dollar towards electricity, natural gas and other forms of energy ... This situation has come to be known as energy poverty, when basic energy needs such as heating, lighting and running appliances become a substantial expense and burden."

"And unfortunately, energy poverty is regressive, hitting lower-income households harder. In 2013, almost 16% of households earning \$27,000 or less, and almost

17% of households earning between \$27,000 and \$47,000, were in energy poverty.” These are the people that we have been talking about for years, Mr. Speaker.

Finally—at least there’s an acknowledgement, but it goes on to say, “Provincial and federal governments should also note how policies can affect prices. Perhaps the most striking example of government policies leading to higher electricity prices comes from Ontario, the province with the third-highest percentage of households in energy poverty. Ontario’s electricity prices grew by more than 50% between the winters of 2005 and 2015.” They doubled. They doubled from 2005 to 2015. That has left people hurting.

1700

Every throne speech should have at the centre of it a reminder to everyone in this House that we are here to serve the people, and that has been lost on this government. The throne speech that was delivered on Monday had some pocketbook items, looking to soften the blow of 13 years of painful policies, but you have only to look at the communities and truly listen to the voices of people in this province to actually hear what they are experiencing. It is a combination of frustration and anger, but there’s also fear, because when energy poverty is so real for people, they see how this will prevent them from reaching their potential. And you’re never going to build Ontario up when you leave the most vulnerable behind. That is what this government has done with their energy policy.

I’m going to read you a couple of letters so that it’s not just me speaking. This is from the Kitchener Post, a letter to the editor. It says, “Humbug to Ontario Hydro Rates.” This was actually written by Harry Watts, who is a World War II veteran who lives in our region and in Kitchener. He says:

“I live on my own and my income is from two pensions: Old Age Security and Canada pension. These I have to stretch a bit for any extras.

“In 1992, I was paying \$50 every two months for my electric bill. Then along came the smart meters and my costs climbed to \$85 for two months. Then along came the gas plant boondoggle and my costs have risen to \$180 every two months. Then Hydro One is sold and now my bill is \$105 for one month.

“I have just turned on my one Christmas tree light and found my old Coleman camp stove and two Coleman pressure lanterns.

“Merry Christmas to the Grinch family.”

I think it took a lot of courage for Harry Watts to actually write that letter and share his story, because it isn’t a story that any of us should be proud of, and it isn’t a story that should be happening in the province of Ontario.

Here’s another writer, Vic Snowden from Kitchener. It says “Humbug to hydro rates” again:

“I read Harry Watts’s letter in the Record where he commented on the ridiculously increased cost of hydro making life very difficult for people who only get Old

Age Security and Canada pension. They should get a break on their hydro bills.

“Watts is a Second World War veteran and I am sure there are others just like him who are struggling to survive and it seems that it is going to get worse under Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne.” That is from December 21.

Another one from Glenn Reist:

“When we received notice in the mail that Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro will change bimonthly billing to monthly billing, I responded by expressing concern. Such a move would be compromising the current popular green philosophy, resulting in additional use of paper and cutting down of trees, and an increase in administration costs to the consumer. The reply from KW Hydro was that this is mandated by the province for all municipalities. Why? Bimonthly billing has served us well for decades.” We would be in agreement with that.

“I now have received the first of the one-month billing, and wow: a 5% increase immediately. Basic economics demands an increase, but I didn’t expect that much upon first billing. I expected a more subtle increase....

“Seniors on CPP and OAS—with a 1.5% annual increase—will soon fall far short.”

This is actually happening. This is happening in all of our communities across Ontario. And what do we have? We have a throne speech which promises—it’s really interesting. They’re going to publish the rebate on their bills, but they’re not going to publish—actually, they refuse to show—the cost of cap-and-trade on natural gas and energy bills. This is a very convenient level of openness and transparency on behalf of the Liberal government.

I will say that since the prorogation and since we’ve all come back—we all, I’m sure, have this sense of anticipation about coming back. This is an amazing place to work. It’s a privilege to represent your communities here. I would also like to extend my congratulations to the member from Niagara. It’s his last day tomorrow. And I do want to pass along my best wishes to our House leader, Gilles Bisson, as he recovers from surgery. He’s had a hard time. We miss him and we do send him our best.

But quite honestly, when you come back here and then you deal with a throne speech like this and this prorogation process, where we have to revisit all of these pieces of legislation, it’s discouraging. It’s discouraging because there’s such a lack of action on the very issues that all of us care so deeply about.

To top it all off, Mr. Speaker, just to finish this point on how strange this place can be, the Liberals have a petition to themselves. The petition reads, “Support lower hydro bills.... Add your name to support lower hydro bills for Ontarians.”

I just want to say I’m going to affix my signature to this because I fully support the lowering of hydro. I can’t table it because it’s not in official petition format, but they have a majority government. They have a majority

government. If you really wanted to address in a substantive way the high cost of energy in the province of Ontario, you could do so. But it didn't happen in that throne speech; it did not happen on Monday. On Monday, what we had was essentially a public relations exercise that will, once again, fail the people of this province.

Now, there are other issues, of course, that were touched on in that throne speech. For us, though, this false choice that you have to sell Hydro One to fund infrastructure when we've also heard from the Premier recently that you have to sell Hydro One to fix Hydro One—and then we've been told that the sale of Hydro One will actually find efficiencies and make energy less costly in the province of Ontario. Nobody believes that. I would encourage the government to try to stop selling that to the people of this province because they're not buying it; nobody is. Then, the whole cost of why energy is so high. This is from the Auditor General: "Ontarians have paid \$37 billion more than market price for electricity over eight years and will pay another \$133 billion extra by 2032."

This is from the AG's report and Adrian Morrow, the *Globe and Mail*: "The Liberal government has repeatedly overruled expert advice." If you are blaming the fact that you had to increase the infrastructure and maintain the energy infrastructure too, and that's why energy costs are so high, that is not true. The reason energy costs so much in the province of Ontario is because of a fundamental mismanagement of the energy file by successive energy ministers, who clearly thought that the billions of dollars—I mean, to be fair, \$37 billion is so much money, it's sometimes lost on people. But you know what they understand? They understand that hydro bill that they get every single month, and they know the truth now. The people of this province know the truth.

I want to end by addressing one of the comments that was made by my colleague from Kitchener Centre. She talked about those of us who attend events for announcements. Well, I must tell you, I don't get invited to those events and I don't think a lot of people, actually, in the opposition get invited to those events. Now, we should attend those events, because it's not your money. It's not your money. It is the people's money, and you should invite us so that if you actually did something good, we could say it. Instead of making a reannouncement about an announcement or having a press conference to make another promise to honour another promise, if you actually were doing something that we could say something positive about, I would go to those events. Of course, I'd have to know about them and I'd have to be invited.

I just want to say it makes it awkward. It seems petty and small-minded. It must be socially awkward for the members when they're in my riding to not have the MPP there. But more important than that, it's disrespectful to the voters who elected us in those ridings. That is really disrespectful, and they see it.

Anyway, I must be doing a really good job because the cabinet ministers are in my riding all the time,

announcing money. So I'm shaking that cage and I'm getting results for the people of Kitchener–Waterloo.

1710

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments.

Mr. Granville Anderson: It's a pleasure for me to rise in this House and speak to the throne speech. Listening to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, one would believe the throne speech only consisted of electricity rates and electricity, but it went further. That was a very small component of the throne speech.

The throne speech talked about helping families find affordable child care by creating over 100,000 new spaces.

The throne speech talked about continuing to make sure young people have the right tools for a changing workforce.

The throne speech went on to talk about building our health care system, a health care system that everyone can rely on.

The throne speech spoke about our investment, at record levels, in hospitals, schools, roads, bridges and transit in communities across Ontario, including Kitchener–Waterloo and ridings of both opposition parties.

I will focus my attention on this: This morning I had the pleasure of being at Durham College to be a part of an announcement of \$22 million for enhancement of that college and the programs in that college—\$22 million provided by the province and another \$13 million by our federal partners, for a total of \$35 million. That was well received. The president of the college alluded to the fact that it was one of the largest investments made by any government since he has been a part of that college. These are positive steps. These are steps that are putting our young people to work, creating jobs, creating opportunities for families.

So there are good components to this throne speech. Listening here, you would hear all the negativity—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.

Mr. Granville Anderson: —but there are positive—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. When I say thank you, you sit.

Questions and comments.

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's a privilege to rise and comment on the member from Kitchener–Waterloo and the points she makes. They're some very good points about how these problems arose, and for years and years the government's whole identity is to ignore that the problems exist. Now, all of a sudden, you have to actually identify that there's a problem with the cost of hydro, health care, the child care spaces and that there's no capacity for the people that need them.

But they've got to blame somebody, so they're going back more than 13 years because after being in power for 13 years, it's tough to blame somebody. After you've doubled your revenue—you're taking twice as many taxes as you did before you came to power and you don't have the money to fix things? The Auditor General did

the unthinkable and actually identified, year after year, the mismanagement in the system. So what's their answer? Reduce her powers; she's telling too much.

The Financial Accountability Officer is coming through and saying that there's no transparency on this new cap-and-trade. That's the new theme: Make sure that the people of Ontario can't find out what's actually happening. We find out from the Auditor General that the OEB and the IESO were recommending all along that these same changes not be made, but the government chose not to listen to them and it has resulted in much higher costs. So what did they do? They changed the legislation so they no longer have to provide this advice, because it's embarrassing when your agencies tell you not to do something because prices will go up and you shouldn't do it, and you ignore it. Now you have to explain to people why you've got the highest prices in North America.

These are problems that are there. The government chose to ignore them, but they're coming back to affect them. I thank the member for Kitchener–Waterloo for identifying one of these. There are many more of these that happened throughout the system.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It's good to be back in a lot of ways. Certainly, we weren't expecting a prorogation this session and a reset of this government, but we can see that it was necessary, actually, because people were speaking out. People were speaking to us in the last session. We were articulating those concerns, and this government wasn't listening.

Finally, a by-election—there was an awakening of this government to understand the effect of the sell-off of Hydro One and what it's doing to consumers, to the public. Speaker, we're pushing this government to stop that sale, and we want to see some action on this side. Yes, they are taking off the HST, but only, of course, as a rebate. There's no commitment to a full lifetime of making sure the HST is not on hydro bills.

The member from Kitchener–Waterloo talked about energy poverty. That's not the first time I've heard that slogan, that cliché. People want something—words—to identify what they're actually experiencing under this government's sell-off of Hydro One. "Energy poverty" says it very clearly.

I've had experiences, and many members have talked about these experiences, and they're actually real. We don't make these stories up. People come to us, into our offices. I'm the seniors critic, and I see seniors on a regular basis. I've had seniors come to my office, and I actually book time to sit with them and listen to their concerns. One gentleman brought his hydro bills. He can't understand, when you have two people, him and his wife, at home and they don't use extra air conditioning and they work their appliances on off-peak hours, why their bills continue to go up.

Speaker, there is a problem in this province. Selling off Hydro is wrong-headed. We want the sale of Hydro One to stop.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm very pleased to rise this afternoon to speak in support of the throne speech.

Let me begin my remarks by recognizing my new colleague from Scarborough–Rouge River and welcoming him to Queen's Park. He's my new neighbour. Welcome, the member from Scarborough–Rouge River.

Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo. Her comments focused specifically on electricity, the high rates. I believe the Premier and the minister recognize the concern province-wide.

A significant portion of the throne speech that the member opposite never recognized is the additional 100,000 licensed daycare spaces over the next five years.

I'm going to say to the member opposite that as a former school board trustee, she can attest to the fact that our parents, our families, desperately need more affordable daycare. In her remarks this afternoon, she never touched upon that portion of the throne speech. I want to remind the audience about this very important part of the throne speech.

As a former school board trustee, as someone who really passionately cares about kids—we know we have to do better; we need to do more. Even the Toronto Star, on September 13, recognized and applauded this government for the expansion of more affordable daycare province-wide in the next five years. I'm going to quote Carolyn Ferns of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, who said, "It's a big commitment. And to get us close to 40% coverage is huge."

Also, national child care expert Martha Friendly supports this proposal in the throne speech.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Kitchener–Waterloo has two minutes.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's always good to hear some of the comments from fellow colleagues. Thank you to the member from Durham. Thank you to Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, London–Fanshawe and Scarborough–Agincourt.

I want to mention to the member from Durham why I talked about energy. I talked about energy because energy connects everything. It connects the economy. It connects the environment. It affects health, when people are deciding to eat or to heat their homes.

I didn't mention daycare because we haven't got the briefing on daycare. We don't know if it's a for-profit model. We don't know if it's going to be direct subsidies. We don't know if it's capital. We don't know. So I'm not going to spend my time, because clearly, if it's based on the election financing committee, they're going to make it up as they go along, because that's what that committee on election finance was this summer.

I do want to say that that's what we heard in the by-election. That's what we hear when we knock on doors, when we go home. People are so frustrated. It is a responsibility that we have, to bring those voices to this place.

I don't want it to be all doom and gloom, but you have to deal with the facts. I just want to go back to the Auditor General's report, because she cited the electricity market as a huge problem, but she also said that her report put 14 different government policy areas under the microscope. Among other things, she reported that the province had doled out piles of corporate welfare behind closed doors, gone \$90 million over budget on a flawed computer system for managing social assistance benefits that has resulted in \$140 million worth of miscalculated payments, has \$500 billion worth of infrastructure that must be fixed and failed to make sure home care providers look after their patients properly. Don't get me wrong: You have other problems than energy, but energy is a big, big problem.

1720

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'm delighted to have the opportunity to speak this afternoon with respect to the throne speech. I will be sharing my time quite happily with my friend and colleague the member from Scarborough Southwest.

I have now had a chance, as we all have here in the chamber this afternoon, to hear from a number of MPPs who have spoken on this side of the House, of course. Members of the government caucus have spoken, I think, very eloquently. I think those watching at home would feel the same way with respect to the pride that we feel on this side of the House regarding this particular speech from the throne, which is really, as I look at it, as we all heard it this past Monday—just a couple of days ago—a throne speech that, of course, is entitled A Balanced Plan to Build Ontario Up for Everyone. It is so full of so many different initiatives that are very clear with respect to the path forward for the province of Ontario. I think “balance” is a key word.

Before I get into the meat of my remarks this afternoon, I found it interesting listening to members of both opposition parties speak earlier today in question period and certainly this afternoon in debate on the throne speech. I guess I would begin by saying I find it somewhat interesting that there is so much focus on that side of this chamber with respect to elections and by-elections. In fact, we heard a member of the NDP caucus earlier challenge the government to actually call an early election campaign. Of course, our friends in the official opposition are very proud of their recent win in Scarborough–Rouge River. Mr. Cho, who was here in the chamber today, obviously deserves congratulations for winning that.

Applause.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Absolutely.

I guess what I find particularly curious is that members of both opposition parties, Conservatives and New Democrats, would be so fixated on election campaigns, given the simple fact that over the last 13 or 14 years, they are now collectively 0-4 in election campaigns. If I could give friendly advice to my colleagues across the

way—and this was mentioned by a speaker earlier on this side of the House—stick to focusing on the issues that matter to the people of Ontario. When you end up in the realm in which you currently are residing, you run the risk of staying on that side of the House, and I have no qualms with that—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Well, I'm not quite sure how this relates to the throne speech. Don't point over there; I'm pointing at you. I think you're just aggravating the situation. It's not necessary. So I think maybe if you stick to the throne speech, that would be good.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I would be happy to talk about the throne speech. I should note, of course, that those were only my opening, preambuling comments. There is so much more that needs to be said, and I sincerely hope that for the balance of the debate on the throne speech, members opposite will be held to the same standard.

So, Speaker, there is—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The minister will sit down again. I am probably one of the fairest Speakers, and I hold everyone to the same standards.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): No, it's fine, but it's directed through me. It's about control, and I know you like control. Thank you.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Thank you very much. Through you, to the members opposite, I hope sincerely that they will find their feet on this and that they will find a way to stick to the topic at hand.

The other thing I will note is that the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, in her remarks today on the throne speech, when she was referencing some of the infrastructure projects—transit and transportation projects, I think, specifically—she talked about the notion that we should invite members of the opposition to these announcements. I will only say that in my two years serving as the Minister of Transportation—in fact, not long after becoming Minister of Transportation—that member specifically was in attendance at an event I did in Kitchener regarding the wonderful Kitchener–Waterloo ION LRT project, a project that our government, thanks to the advocacy of my colleague from Kitchener and her predecessor and this Premier, is making a significant contribution to.

Secondly, I see that my dear friend, my opposition critic, the member from Niagara Falls, is here with us today. Not that long ago, thanks in large part to the blueprint, the balance plan that is contained in the throne speech with respect to moving the province forward and building it up, the member from Niagara Falls was there when the Premier—thanks to the Premier's leadership—the current chief government whip, the member from St. Catharines, myself and others were actually in St. Catharines to announce that we will be extending GO train service to Niagara Falls.

I guess this is my way of saying to the member from Kitchener Centre and others that there are opportunities

for opposition members to be there to celebrate the good news, because there is so much good news to be celebrated, particularly with respect to the transportation and infrastructure investments that we're making across the province of Ontario.

I could spend quite a bit of time this afternoon talking just about the transportation pieces that are contained in the throne speech, and I'll come back to those in just a quick second.

I also wanted to point out, on page 8 of the throne speech itself, it was contained that since 2013, seven new hospitals have been built in five communities. I think everyone, on both sides of the House, amongst all three caucuses, would understand the importance of making sure that fundamentally top-quality health care and hospitals are provided for the people of Ontario.

I am so proud, as many in this chamber would know and have heard me say in the past, to represent the community of Vaughan. Not that many weeks ago—thanks again to the Premier and to this government with respect to how we are building the province up, and thanks to the balanced plan we have that is contained in the throne speech—we were able to announce that the hospital that will be built in my community, in Vaughan, a project that many of us have worked hard on for a number of years—that the contract has been awarded to an organization, to a company, and we expect that groundbreaking will happen a little bit later this year. That's just one of many examples that we have, both in this throne speech and within our government's general agenda, to move the province forward.

There was a discussion earlier this afternoon from colleagues on this side of the House with respect to the 100,000 daycare spaces. We understand, of course, that if we are going to provide support for those individuals across the province who are looking for more opportunities, it's so important to make sure we are there to provide them with that support. That is a key element that goes right to the heart of providing that support.

Right off the top, I did reference transportation infrastructure. I don't think any of my remarks in this chamber would be complete if I didn't spend a little bit of time talking about that part of our agenda, which is, of course, a part of my mandate letter from the Premier to deliver on. Whether we're talking about wonderful communities like Hamilton—which, as we all know, recently in media has been showcased as a community, as a city that's going through a renaissance, which is fantastic news not only for Hamilton but for all of Ontario. I think, of course, of the Hamilton LRT project.

I referenced the ION LRT project, GO train service to Niagara, GO train service that we are going to be providing all the way out to Durham, to Bowmanville, thanks to my colleague from Durham and because of his advocacy. I look at members, whether we're talking members in the government caucus or members in both opposition parties—there isn't a community in the province of Ontario that does not have an infrastructure need. There is not a community in the province of

Ontario, anywhere, in all 444 municipalities, that does not have a transportation infrastructure need.

Thanks to the investments, thanks to the leadership of Premier Kathleen Wynne and everyone else on this side of the House, as is contained in this throne speech that we all heard just a couple of days ago, we can not only celebrate all that we've achieved over the last two years, but we can look forward to the next two years and beyond those next two years to make sure—whether we're talking about GO regional express rail, delivering two-way, all-day GO service, electrified, in up to 15-minute intervals in terms of that service on core segments of our network; whether we're talking about four-laning Highways 11 and 17 in the north; whether we're talking about roads, bridges and waste water infrastructure right across the province of Ontario.

I see my friend and colleague the Minister of Infrastructure. He is someone who has been working extremely hard with his provincial, federal and territorial counterparts to make sure that we can go forward, that we can continue to make sure that those investments provide those positive benefits.

1730

I look at my very good friend and colleague the MPP from Barrie, who has talked to me regularly, has been a staunch champion and advocate for her community to make sure that we do deliver—and we will deliver—two-way, all-day, electrified GO service all the way up the Barrie corridor to Barrie, as we committed to over the next number of years. And the list goes on. The list goes on, whether we're talking about communities like Windsor—I already referenced Niagara Falls. I've talked about Hamilton. We certainly have, in Peel region, an LRT that will be built along Hurontario. We have the single-largest public transit project in Ontario history currently under construction in midtown Toronto along Eglinton, the Eglinton Crosstown LRT—a commitment to build, first at the table—a commitment to build the Scarborough subway extension and so much more.

To sum up, with the remaining few seconds that I have on the clock before my colleague from Scarborough Southwest will come to his feet and will provide us with his impressions of the throne speech, Speaker, I just want to say I get why my friends on the other side of the House want to focus on their agenda; I understand it. It's part of the cut and thrust of the undertaking of this profession here in this chamber. But I would ask them to reflect for just a moment and understand that this plan is the best way imaginable to move the province of Ontario forward—a stronger economy, whether we're talking about the community of North Bay or others.

I know it's troubling. I know when you're in opposition you don't like good news for your own province, because it's counter to your own motives and objectives. But I'm asking you just for a moment to do what's unusual for people in your position: Put your crass self-interest aside and support the people of Ontario and support the province of Ontario and support this throne speech.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Scarborough-Lakeshore—I'm sorry, Scarborough Southwest.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've gotten up to speak a few times today, and eventually people will get to know what riding of the Scarborough ridings I represent.

Speaking of the Scarborough ridings, Mr. Speaker, just for a few moments, I wanted to welcome into the Legislature the new member from Scarborough-Rouge River. I had the opportunity to work with him in the city of Toronto as a councillor for many years. I know that he'll be a good contribution here to the Legislature. I look forward to working with him in the next few years. I wanted to get that on the record.

I just want to speak about a few issues about the throne speech. Of course, people are focused on the main issue, which was the electricity rates, but there are some other things that were mentioned. One of the big ones was the creation of an additional 100,000 licensed spaces in the next five years for child care. I think it's a very important contribution. Child care is a very important issue and 100,000 spaces is quite a large contribution.

I just wanted to move to one story that is quite interesting. I was reading an article by an Italian journalist who writes for an Italian newspaper. She was commenting on the fact that the Italian government is trying to get the Italian birth rate up, because it's going down quite a bit. So they're having a day, which actually translates to "have more babies day," in Italy, which is later in September. This journalist—a woman—mentioned the fact that she had two children. She said, "My husband and I would have more children, but we don't have anyone to take care of the children. We both work." The husband and the wife both work. She's a journalist, her husband has another job, and they have two children. She said, "The main system of child care for children in Italy are the grandparents," with the grandparents taking care of the children when they're first born for the first few years. The same thing could be said in other jurisdictions around the world.

But here in Ontario, we recognize the importance of proper child care. Grandparents do a lot of that work, I know, because my mother and father did it for eight different grandchildren. People have to work more and more hours these days, the workforce has changed, and we want to make sure that children are well taken care of. So the creation of 100,000 child care facilities is quite significant, I think, for the province of Ontario.

I also wanted to mention—it was mentioned a bit in the throne speech briefly—the issue about the election finance reform. I sat on that committee as well, Mr. Speaker, for two days during the summertime. It's long overdue that we make election reform. The government has listened to the opposition, listened to what they want to include in the new legislation. There was extensive travel by the committee to get opinions of various people across the province. We're listening, and we're going to have several amendments introduced.

The bill was reintroduced yesterday after the prorogation. I think it's important to be able to contribute to that committee and to bring some reforms. It's long overdue. The federal government has done it. The city of Toronto, where we are right now, has made changes as well with regard to contributions. I'm glad to see that our government is moving on this issue as well.

I also want to mention briefly the issue about young people in our province. We're continuing to make sure that young people have the right tools for a changing workforce. We're putting new emphasis on math skills, expanding experiential learning and encouraging more young people to turn their good ideas into start-ups.

When I went to high school, I always wondered, "Why do I have to study calculus? Why do I have to study other mathematical courses?" Algebra, and there was another one—relations and functions. There were complex formulas we had to learn, and I thought, "What does this have to do with the workforce or life in general?" But it creates a way of thinking. Those mathematical courses create a way of thinking where you analyze things and you organize things in a certain way, which is helpful.

People come to my office, young adults come to my office, and they're looking for jobs. It's an issue in my riding of Scarborough Southwest. There are a lot of young people who can't find good work. A lot of them drop out of high school. They'll drop out earlier. Even if they drop out at the age of 18, they won't take the courses they need to take to get into the workforce and be able to contribute to society.

We've always been focused, since we came into government, on education. We created the junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten child care. Every school in my riding and schools across the province were forced to put in some kind of child care component. I think it's very important that we continue to focus on that issue.

Speaking of the next issue, health care, we've been involved, since we got elected back in 2003, in improving the health care system. We know—and I won't repeat; people have spoken about it earlier and it's been spoken about many times in this House—how much this government has helped improve the health care system here in Ontario. We're investing in front-line workers. We're helping seniors with the cost of prescription drugs and reducing wait times for specialists. Anyone who has older adults—when my parents became older, they needed cataract surgery. The cataract surgery was done very, very rapidly and their vision improved. There was a very short wait time for that.

We're also expanding hours for nursing care and 1.3 million hours of personal support, enhancing home and community care. We gave the personal support workers a raise two years ago with a budget that went through just after our re-election back in 2014. I think it's really important to give respect and to give proper remuneration to the personal support workers here in Ontario. They do a lot of work.

Just to make it personal, on my own issue: My father needs help. He's at home by himself, and a personal

support worker comes to the house—not enough for my dad, according to him, but he is getting some help, at least. They come in, and they're paid for by our government to make sure that people who are older are properly taken care of. They get their showers and they're cleaned properly and well taken care of. My dad even gets the personal support worker to shave his face twice a week and cut his toenails—things that are important that seniors can't do on their own anymore.

This is not just for myself but for senior citizens across Ontario. It's very important that we provide that help to senior citizens, the health care help, and to recognize them by giving them the proper amount of money and paying them properly and not just looking at them as people who are not that important. They are very important.

1740

It's been mentioned several times that we're investing in new hospitals, schools, roads, bridges and transit. I know that my friend the Minister of Transportation already spoke about the fact that the Eglinton Crosstown line is being built. Every time I drive across Eglinton, I can see construction going on. It's quite extensive. It's going to go right across Eglinton, ending up in the riding of Scarborough Southwest, which I represent, at Kennedy subway station. From there, someone can either take a bus or the Scarborough rapid transit system all the way up to Scarborough Town Centre and the Scarborough Civic Centre as well, which is very important.

A lot of that's been left behind in the transportation stuff. We've picked it up since we came into power. We've made a much better job of improving transportation.

There's a lot more I would like to say, but time's run out. So perhaps, on another occasion, I'll have a chance to speak some more, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's a privilege to rise in the House as always and comment on some of the points I heard across. The Minister of Transportation talked about sticking to what people want, and I think they're only now listening because they see the results of having ignored what people want or what this province needs year after year.

He talked about seven hospitals. One of the hospitals in my region—big expansion to the Winchester hospital. Shortly after it was completed—we had a big opening and a lot of people down to speak—they closed 22% of the beds. I guess you wonder, if you're building an expansion and then planning to shut the beds down a year later, why are you building it?

They built a brand new ICU unit. One of the doctors on a tour there wanted to show me the unit, but it was closed down. The doors are chained shut. Why do you build these things if you have no intention of funding them? That's just a waste.

Two years ago, they were looking at losing their chemotherapy, except the political fallout would have

been too great. This year—we heard about the 1% increase—they're talking about losing \$1 million in funding. So this is what we're seeing from this government.

They talk about the daycare shortage and how they're going to fix the problem. They created the problem in the first place by all these licensing requirements that shut down a lot of the facilities. Now we're seeing that only 20% of the people are actually being served with licensed daycare. This is their problem. They can talk about riding in on their white horse to fix it, but they created it in the first place.

It's little wonder that I saw an article, in the last couple of months, in Maclean's magazine—a fairly large, well-respected magazine in Ontario—talking about how Wynne has Ontario moving backwards. That was the headline, and they're taking great pride in their strides?

People are waking up. It's time for this government to see exactly what's going on and take steps.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I appreciate saying a few words. Before I get into my two minutes, I just want to say to the Minister of Transportation, who's been here most of the afternoon—he's probably just out back having a coffee—that there was no mention in the throne speech of Niagara and GO to Niagara, so it was good to hear him mention that. The local radio station was asking me why it wasn't mentioned. He stood up and said it, so that's good.

But I'm going to continue to talk about the crisis in hydro. Make no mistake about it, it's the number one issue in the province of Ontario, and our party realized that a long time ago. We've been going around the province for up to six months, maybe even longer, talking about hydro and having meetings with community after community, whether it was in Windsor, whether it was in Sarnia, or whether it was in Kitchener. It didn't matter where it was—Welland—we were having meetings right across the province. Some would say to me, "Why would you do that?" It was easy for us, why we did it: We wanted to listen to the residents of Ontario, because that made sense. We wanted to know what they really felt about what was going on with hydro.

The difference between what we did and what the Liberals did was that they never once went to the province of Ontario and the voters to say, "Can we sell hydro?" It was never asked. I won in two elections and not once was it raised by the two candidates who ran against me from the Liberal Party—not once. So what they didn't do is ask the residents what they said. Independent people have done studies and surveys. Think about this: 85% of the residents are saying, "Don't sell Hydro." Did they listen? Unfortunately, no.

Municipalities right across the province of Ontario have all said no to the sell-off of Hydro One. You heard it loud and clear at AMO. If you want to fix hydro, don't sell Hydro One.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: We keep on having long-term memory problems, Mr. Speaker. I just want to remind us that when we came into power, the government before us, their own study pointed out that 80% of all energy infrastructure in Ontario had to be replaced or repaired. The \$8 billion alone in transmission, and the refurbishment of nuclear plants—nuclear plants cost \$15 billion. The AECL, the federal nuclear regulator, when the Tories were in power, called the nuclear systems unsafe, operating at substandard, barely acceptable levels. So what did they do?

Mr. Norm Miller: They fixed it.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No, you didn't fix it. What happened in 2002 between May and July? Hydro rates in Ontario doubled from three to six cents. And what was your solution? You froze them at 4.3 cents.

And then you did something else: From 2002 on, you stopped investing in hydro. As a matter of fact, while we're spending between \$13 billion and \$15 billion a year on infrastructure, the record low in the history of Ontario and in Canada of any province was in that 10-year period when you spent a total on highways, hydro, schools and hospitals of between \$1 billion and \$3 billion. The financial crises that came after that were because of an unprecedented level of disinvestment.

What else did you do? During that same period of time, you downloaded health and social services on forced amalgamations of cities. My friend Bob Chiarelli was mayor of Ottawa at the time. We uploaded health and social services in Manitoba, freeing up capacity in the city of Winnipeg, while you added hundreds of millions of dollars of unfunded costs and left municipalities with roads and infrastructure.

So maybe an apology, Mr. Speaker, rather than criticism, would be appropriate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Member from Chatham-Kent-Essex.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I don't know about an apology, because I believe that—as he was referring to, perhaps, a former PC Premier—he's got to go back a little further than that to the mess that the NDP left us in, and before that, the mess that David Peterson and the Liberals left us in. How far do you want to go back in history?

The Premier's reset button, I believe, has failed. It was a faulty, faulty button. One of the things that they need to do is they need to stop the sale of Hydro One. In addition to that, they need to stop paying these exorbitant contracts for what we're paying for the industrial wind turbines, solar panels and so on.

I kind of look at it and I say, "Why is that? Why must they stop all of this?" It's very simple: The government's policies are simply driving business and industry out of the province. That's why we have an overabundance of energy right now, whereby they're either selling it cheaply, or they're actually paying jurisdictions to take our energy. I could say, I suppose, to the last business or industry to leave the province, "Please turn out the lights." But then again, that might be an oxymoron, because with the global adjustment and/or delivery

charges, they're going to be overcharged, and they've already left the country. So who gets stuck with that? Let me guess. It will be the consumers of Ontario, people like you and I, Speaker, for sure.

The other thing I want to point out is that the hydro rates are so high right now, it's penalizing seniors and it's penalizing people on ODSP and Ontario Works and so on. They can't afford—"Do I heat or do I eat? What's it going to be?" It's interesting to note that over 60,000 households in the province of Ontario have been cut off from their hydro—they've cut off their service—and over 600,000 households in the province of Ontario are in arrears with either Hydro One or their LDC.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Member from Scarborough-Southwest, two minutes.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: First of all, I wanted to acknowledge the Minister of Transportation for allowing me to do the two-minuter. I also want to thank the members from Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry and from Niagara Falls, the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change and the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex. You've all brought up very good points. Of course hydro is a big issue in Ontario. There's no doubt about it, and I'm not downplaying it.

1750

But when I spoke, I mentioned some other things that were in the throne speech that were important. Creating 100,000 new spaces in Ontario is very, very significant. We had unregulated child care spaces in Ontario that were not run very well. But we're making sure that these 100,000 new spaces are regulated. That's very important, as I mentioned earlier in my speech, the whole issue about parents having to go to work and leaving their children in the hands of people that they can trust. That's very important to do. The last thing you want to do is leave your child with someone where you're not sure what's going to happen. I've seen unregulated child care facilities in Toronto and Scarborough Southwest. It's dangerous when they are unregulated. We're moving to create the 100,000 regulated spots in the next few years, and it's quite important.

The hydro issue: I don't want to downplay it at all. It's very, very important. One thing to mention about hydro that I think is very important is that we've shut down all coal-generated plants in Ontario. Especially in Toronto and the west end, it's very important. We had summers where we had smog days, and it was so bad that seniors and children were asked to stay indoors. Those smog days are gone. The plants were shut down, and the smog days are gone because coal is no longer being burned. I think it's quite significant too, in terms of our health care system and in terms of improving health and well-being in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Todd Smith: It looks like I'm only going to have a few minutes to get my remarks in this afternoon on the throne speech that we experienced on Monday—a very disappointing throne speech.

After the Liberals lost the by-election in Scarborough–Rouge River last week and they decided that they were going to suddenly prorogue the Legislature, we thought that maybe they would come back with something substantial, that they would change their ways, that they would actually see the light. But what they have done is hit the reboot, and as my colleague has said, that button just didn't work. The eject button failed. There are a number of us in here on this side of the House that would love to hit the eject button and send about 58 people out of this Legislature, and maybe we'll get that chance soon enough.

The government said that they were listening, after the by-election loss in Scarborough–Rouge River. They said that they were hearing at the door that people were upset about the rising cost of electricity and what it was doing to their monthly and weekly bills. They couldn't afford to eat. They couldn't afford to put their kids in after-school programs or extracurricular activities like soccer or hockey or all those fun things. These kids weren't able to do things after school. People were having to choose between heating and eating—all of those things that we've been saying, on the opposition benches, over and over and over again.

I was elected almost five years ago. I've been in this chamber for almost five years. Any idea how many times I myself have brought up energy poverty or electricity prices in this House over those five years? Not 50, not 100; this is the 167th time that I've actually brought up electricity, energy crisis, energy poverty in this House. You know what? I'm sure the member from Nipissing has brought it up twice as many times as I have. I'm sure our energy critic from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has brought it up a million times in the House over the many years that he's been here, because it was the PC Party that was opposed to the Green Energy Act from the moment that it was even decided upon, on the back of that napkin that George Smitherman handed to Dalton McGuinty one morning in 2007, which has led us to where we are today, and that is in a deep, deep, deep energy crisis in Ontario.

It's unbelievable, really, that we are where we're at right now in Ontario. In 2003, we had the cheapest electricity in North America. The factories were humming in Hamilton; they were humming in Oshawa; they were humming in St. Thomas, in Windsor, and all across the province. People were working. They were going to work, and the biggest reason why was because energy was affordable. We were a low-cost jurisdiction. The government of the day was cutting red tape, making sure that people could actually earn a living, that people could actually live in their homes, and if they wanted to buy a new home, they could afford to do so. If they wanted to renovate their home, they could actually afford to do so.

But instead, now, 13 years later, as a result of this government's policies—these guys have been in there for 13 years. This is the government that took Ontario from having the cheapest electricity to the most expensive

electricity in North America. God bless them. Mission accomplished. Just a terrible, terrible record when it comes to management of our electricity grid.

You know, there have been a lot of moments where this government could have seen the light on the road to Damascus. It's been a long, long trip from wherever they were going to get to Damascus. But they never, ever saw the light. They didn't see the light when Auditor General report after Auditor General report came out and said, "This government has to stop its policies in the Green Energy Act where we are paying—not millions—billions of dollars more for electricity projects that we don't need."

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Stop the clock.

I thought that I asked the minister earlier this afternoon not to do the megaphone thing, and he's back at it.

Hon. David Zimmer: No, you said I shouldn't do that if I wasn't in my seat.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): No, I didn't say that. You just added that, and I'm telling you, don't do it again. You're warned.

Hon. David Zimmer: Even if I'm in my seat?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): You're warned.

Hon. David Zimmer: Okay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Continue.

Mr. Todd Smith: Listen, I understand that the business of government is hard. It's really hard. But it would have been nice if the government had realized that we had an energy crisis in Ontario after the first Auditor General's report that said that, or after the Ombudsman's report that said that, or after numerous stories in the media said that or after all kinds of different motions from the NDP and the PC Party calling on the government to change their ways. But they didn't do it. They didn't do it.

In that first week that I was here in November 2011, there was a private member's bill that was brought forward by the member from Algoma–Manitoulin. Mr. Mantha brought forward a private member's motion. You here were, sir, in the Chair. You remember what that motion was. It said we should remove the HST from hydro bills, right? The NDP, of course, supported it because it was one of their members that brought it forward, and the PCs thought it was a great idea because we knew five years ago that we were in crisis when it came to energy prices.

Guess who voted against that bill, Mr. Speaker? Take a guess. It was Kathleen Wynne and the Liberal government. Twenty of those ministers are currently in the cabinet that voted against that private member's bill to take the HST off of hydro bills way back in November 2011. Suddenly, they have seen the light, however. But the light should have gone off in November of 2011. Unfortunately, it didn't.

It has taken story after story in the media this summer—Global News did a tremendous bit of journalism, and it's nice to see that they were out there actually

talking to the people of Ontario, like we on the opposition bench do every day. I was at the grocery store on Saturday morning. I must have had 50 people come up to me while I was trying to help my daughter sell Krispy Kreme doughnuts for her Belleville Bearcats midget hockey team: “When are we going to get rid of those guys because they don’t get it when it comes to electricity prices?”

They had high hopes that maybe, when we arrived here on Monday morning like we did, that throne speech was going to give them the relief that they were looking for on their hydro bills. Nothing. It’s a joke, what they have proposed when it comes to electricity prices. It’s a joke. The price of electricity is going to go up 10% or 12% this year. Thank you very much for taking the 8% off the HST and not doing anything about the real cost of electricity. They’re just not doing it.

But thanks to Global for doing that story over the summer. Thanks to the Toronto Star. They did a really nice story about a lady in my riding. She’s a 74-year-old lady, Peggy Mills, who lives in McArthurs Mills, where

the elk roam, just east of Bancroft, in the beautiful hills of North Hastings. She was cut off from her hydro—a 74-year-old artist living on a \$17,000 income. She took her oven out of her house and her refrigerator out of her house. She went to her neighbour’s house to have a bath, for goodness’ sake. The hydro was cut off.

The Toronto Star did the story, and I know tomorrow morning, when we resume this debate on the throne speech, I will have an opportunity to tell Peggy’s story a little bit more—and some of the people I’ve talked to in Bancroft.

But 60,000 people have been disconnected from hydro services in Ontario. This is Ontario. It’s completely unacceptable. The wake-up call apparently needs to be louder than what was the result of your throne speech on Monday.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being 6 o’clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o’clock.

The House adjourned at 1800.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Hon. / L'hon. Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Ballard, Hon. / L'hon. Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	Minister of Housing / Ministre du Logement Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of International Trade / Ministre du Commerce International
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism / Ministre délégué à l'Action contre le racisme
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cookville	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement économique et de la Croissance
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Hon. / L'hon. Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister Responsible for Accessibility / Ministre responsable de l'Accessibilité Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development / Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle Minister Responsible for Digital Government / Ministre responsable du Gouvernement numérique
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales
McDonnell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research, Innovation and Science / Ministre de la Recherche, de l'Innovation et des Sciences
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Indira (LIB)	Halton	Associate Minister of Education (Early Years and Child Care) / Ministre associée de l'Éducation (Petite enfance et Garde d'enfants)
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Attorney General / Procureur général Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Hon. / L'hon. Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakubuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation / Ministre des Relations avec les Autochtones et de la Réconciliation
Vacant	Ottawa–Vanier	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉ PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Bob Delaney, Cheri DiNovo
Joe Dickson, Han Dong
Michael Harris, Sophie Kiwala
Arthur Potts, Todd Smith
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Peter Z. Milczyn
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yvan Baker
Yvan Baker, Toby Barrett
Han Dong, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Ann Hoggarth
Peter Z. Milczyn, Lou Rinaldi
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lou Rinaldi
Yvan Baker, Mike Colle
Grant Crack, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Harinder Malhi
Jim McDonell, Lou Rinaldi
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Présidente: Cristina Martins
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Daiene Vernile
James J. Bradley, Raymond Sung Joon Cho
Wayne Gates, Monte Kwinter
Amrit Mangat, Cristina Martins
Randy Pettapiece, Shafiq Qaadri
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Mike Colle
Bob Delaney, Randy Hillier
Michael Mantha, Cristina Martins
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri
Laurie Scott
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Steve Clark
Granville Anderson, Robert Bailey
James J. Bradley, Steve Clark
Vic Dhillon, Sophie Kiwala
Michael Mantha, Monte McNaughton
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
John Fraser, Ernie Hardeman
Percy Hatfield, Monte Kwinter
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Peter Z. Milczyn, Julia Munro
Arthur Potts
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Ted McMeekin
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Grant Crack
Joe Dickson, Jennifer K. French
Ted McMeekin, Mario Sergio
Bill Walker, Soo Wong
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Granville Anderson, Lorne Coe
Vic Dhillon, John Fraser
Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow
Ted McMeekin, Jagmeet Singh
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch